

INVESTIGATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTONOMY
IN A BANGLADESHI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

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Learner autonomy has gained momentum in second and foreign language pedagogy in the past decades. Autonomous learning approach has brought substantial independence to learners. This study investigated L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj in Bangladesh. This study examined three issues: (a) how L2 English learners perceived autonomous learning at BSMRSTU, (b) how L2 English learners perceived teacher-centered learning at BSMRSTU, and (c) whether the learners at BSMRSTU preferred autonomous learning or teacher-centered learning. Participants in this study were 100 native speakers of Bangla studying in BA and MA programs in the English Department at BSMRSTU. They completed a survey assessing their perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. The survey has 50 Likert-scale statements categorized into two groups: 25 of the statements designed to elicit students' opinions about autonomous learning and the other 25 designed to elicit responses about teacher-centered learning. Results revealed no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of L2 English learners of BSMRSTU regarding their preference between autonomous and teacher-centered learning approaches. Pedagogical implications and directions for future research are provided in the discussion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Learner autonomy is a significant issue to consider in second language (L2) teaching and learning as it considerably influences learner success. Generally speaking, autonomy means acting from choice. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2022), it is defined as “a state of independence and self-determination in an individual, a group, or a society.” Learner autonomy refers to learners’ ability to take charge of their own learning, be it in the classroom or independent study, and it is also regarded as self-regulated learning. Taking the control and responsibility of one’s own learning is crucial in a higher education classroom. Autonomous learning is an independent and proactive approach to learning (English Language Teaching Global Blog, 2013). It makes the learners self-reliant, which is particularly important for learning English as a second/foreign language.

Learner autonomy or autonomous learning is relatively a new approach in higher education. It is synonymous to independent or self-motivated learning. It has significant pedagogical implications in language learning since autonomous learners can bear the responsibility of their own learning. When students study and learn independently, they become more efficient learners. This thesis study examines learners’ perception of autonomous learning in a public university in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi students learn English as a second/foreign language from childhood but they encounter certain barriers in written and oral examinations in English in their higher education level. Language learning is a complex activity, and this is why classroom learning and teachers’ guidelines alone are not enough to achieve high proficiency in any language. Thus, autonomous learning can be practiced in the classroom and be promoted outside the class. In learner

autonomy, students' self-engagement and personal efforts are important. Siddique (2020) has found that both teachers and students acknowledge the importance of learner autonomy in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in Bangladesh. However, the problem of Bangladesh classrooms is that most of the students are passive learners and thus they are not willing to communicate or participate in learning actively because of their anxiety. Siddique's (2020) recommendation is that, in order to implement learner autonomy, the autonomous learning approach should be introduced to the students from an earlier age and that proper strategies should be used by the teacher to promote learner autonomy.

Teacher-centered learning presents the diametrically opposite view to autonomous learning. Teachers are generally used to teaching in a traditional classroom rather than implementing an autonomous classroom. Hence, teachers need to understand the characteristics of autonomous learners. For example, autonomous learners can set their own goals and objectives of learning English. They can also choose their own methods and strategies, tasks and activities, and materials for learning English in class. They can take charge of their own learning and determine the pace of learning. Autonomous learners are also reflective learners. They believe that self-determination and self-effort are important for effective learning. They also have clear ideas of their learning style and can use it effectively. Autonomous learners are well aware of their strengths and weaknesses in their English skills and can assess their own progress of language learning. They can correct minor mistakes on their own and usually look for solutions to problems in English by themselves. Eventually, they can evaluate their own performances in class. They also try out new things in their own way and use English outside the classroom.

On the contrary, learners who prefer teacher-centered learning do not have enough management skills to learn English by themselves. They require a lot of guidance and regular feedback from the teacher when learning English. They excessively depend on teachers when setting goals and objectives of learning as well as when choosing methods and strategies, tasks, activities, and materials for learning. They love ‘spoon feeding’. Teachers have to find out students’ learning styles and motivate them to learn English. Teachers also have to inform learners directly when there is a mistake and correct all the mistakes. Learners who prefer teacher-centered learning want the teacher to inform them of their progress and how to do new activities to learn English.

In order to promote autonomous learning, it is crucial for teachers to understand how L2 English learners perceive autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. A comprehensive understanding of learners’ perception of the both approaches will help design certain pedagogical practices that will create a culture of autonomous learning in L2 English contexts. Using a survey instrument, this study assesses learners’ perceptions of both approaches in a university in Bangladesh.

English is mainly spoken as a foreign/second language in the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, a South Asian country that received independence from Pakistan in 1971. Before the partition in 1947, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan were one geographical location. The colonization of the Indian subcontinent started with the establishment of the British East India Company, and the colonizing mission continued from 1858 to 1947. Due to the British colonization, British English has been used for education, trade, commerce, administration, media, law, and constitution in Bangladesh. According to Ethnologue (2022), there are 44 living languages in Bangladesh. Bangla is the state language of Bangladesh as per its constitution.

English is the widely used language in Bangladesh after Bangla, although there is a controversy whether English is a second or foreign language in the country. Bangladeshi universities offer Bachelor of Arts (BA), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in different fields of English language and literature. Learner autonomy may be implemented in some of these degree programs.

The goal of the study is to investigate L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), a state university in Gopalganj in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study investigates which approach is preferred by students at BSMRSTU, autonomous learning or teacher-centered learning. Findings from this study will help teachers better understand L2 English learners' perceptions regarding learner autonomy. Some pragmatic measures might be taken to encourage autonomous learning at this university. Moreover, the study findings may produce significant pedagogical implications that can improve the English programs in private and public universities in Bangladesh and in similar L2 English contexts. Since there are unlimited career opportunities for competent English speakers both at home and abroad, assessment of autonomous learning is critical for developing successful, independent English speakers. The current study intends to contribute to this direction.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner autonomy refers to the learners' ability to take responsibility for their own learning (Boyadzhieva, 2016). Learner autonomy has assumed increased importance in second and foreign language pedagogy in the past decades. A shift in pedagogical practices from traditional teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms has brought considerable independence and autonomy to learners. These two approaches to language teaching (teacher-centered and learner-centered) have been designed on the basis of the conceptual underpinnings of instructivism and constructivism, respectively (University of Maryland Baltimore County, 2020). When the learners are autonomous, they can make informed choices of their learning styles, preferences, and assessment. The understanding of teacher and learner perceptions of learner autonomy is paramount in determining the current status of learner autonomy and the ways in which learner autonomy can be promoted in Bangladeshi universities. Thus, by evaluating perceptions of learner autonomy and the extent to which learner autonomy is implemented in English pedagogy in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), the present study can generate insight into approaches, techniques, and activities that develop learner autonomy.

The goal of this literature review is to explore plausible ways to promote learner autonomy in English language pedagogy in Bangladeshi universities. In the following section, I will first present the literature in two main areas: teachers' perceptions of autonomous learning and learners' perceptions of autonomous learning in Bangladeshi tertiary-level education. After describing the perceptions of learner autonomy, I will present the approaches, tools, techniques

and activities that have been found useful in enhancing learner autonomy in L2 English context of Bangladesh.

Teacher perceptions of learner autonomy

A consensus coming from existing studies is that teachers are generally familiar with the concept of learner autonomy; however, to boost learner autonomy within ESL context in Bangladesh, significant readiness and commitment are required both from teachers and learners. Begum's (2018) qualitative study involved six ESL teachers at a private university in Bangladesh. The goals of the study were two-fold: to investigate the teachers' perceptions regarding learner autonomy in L2 English teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh and to explore the strategies that teachers used to develop learner autonomy. Participants completed an interview and a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) asking about their perceptions and practices about learner autonomy in ESL classrooms. The findings showed that teachers had a basic understanding about the benefits of learner autonomy, but they needed some commitment and freedom to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms.

In another study, Jamila (2013) conducted a mixed-method study that involved 30 English language teachers from four private universities of Bangladesh. Participants completed a survey and interviews asking about their beliefs and views regarding the inclusion of learner autonomy in ESL speaking classes. The results revealed that the teachers were not able to implement learner autonomy while teaching English speaking skills. In addition, 90% of the teachers confessed that the ESL learners were not permitted to select their learning materials. Jamila (2013) discovered that teachers still practiced traditional teaching methods within their classrooms and did not permit their learners to evaluate their own language performance.

Findings from Jamila's (2013) study also indicate teachers' attitude toward learner autonomy: Teachers were generally indifferent to learner autonomy.

Results from Jamil's (2010) study provide additional insight into teachers' perspectives of learner autonomy in the context of Bangladesh. Jamil's (2010) qualitative study involved five Master of Education students from a private university in Bangladesh. Participants completed a survey and interviews asking about the outcome of an EAP course, its contents, and the inclusion of learner autonomy in the course. Although teachers felt the plausibility of integrating learning autonomy in the EAP syllabus, they also found the practice difficult, reporting that a solid teacher training is required to implement learner-centered teaching. Thus, results from this study demonstrate that teacher motivation is a prerequisite to the effective implementation of learner autonomy.

While the studies summarized above revealed challenges for implementing learner autonomy in the classroom, several studies documented a successful implementation of autonomous learning. For example, Sultana's (2016) mixed-method study involving 100 undergraduate students and four university teachers from a leading private university in Bangladesh investigated the dynamic roles of teachers in implementing the autonomous learning approach. Participants completed interviews, focused group discussions and a questionnaire which informed of the roles and strategies that teachers could apply to promote autonomous learning in ESL classrooms. The findings revealed critical roles that teachers played for the successful implementation of autonomous learning. Some of those roles involved a teacher as an organizer, manager, facilitator, feedback provider, researcher, independent learner, needs analyst, syllabus designer, motivator, and guide (Sultana, 2016). By playing these roles, teachers were able to prepare students for taking their own responsibility for ESL learning outside the

classroom. Thus, ESL students were more participatory and independent in learning when the teachers played those dynamic roles. Findings from Sultana's (2016) study also indicate that the teachers' roles differed depending on the basis of the ESL teaching contexts and learners' personalities in autonomous learning. Together, these findings add to the generalization that ESL teachers in Bangladesh have both positive and negative attitude toward learner autonomy.

Learner perceptions of learner autonomy

While the prior studies focused on teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy, several studies focused on learners' own perceptions of learner autonomy. A few trends emerged from the existing findings. The most notable trend was that undergraduate ESL learners had positive perceptions of learner autonomy (Bashir, 2014; Begum & Chowdhury, 2016). Bashir's (2014) study was based on a mixed-method model and involved 69 ESL learners (first-year undergraduate students) from a public university in Bangladesh. The study investigated the ESL learners' perception of autonomous learning and teacher-centered instruction and their readiness for autonomous learning in Bangladesh. Participants completed a survey asking about their perceptions of autonomous learning with four open-ended questions. Results showed that the participants preferred autonomous learning over traditional teacher-centered instruction. Furthermore, learners were willing to take charge of their own learning, materials, and classroom activities. However, results also revealed that the participants did not feel fully competent to self-assess their performance. They indicated that they still need the teachers' support for determining their learning styles and strategies which best assist their language acquisition.

Another study conducted by Mehrin (2017) involved 80 undergraduate students of English from a state university in Bangladesh who were tasked with completing a survey and focus-group interviews. This study also investigated tertiary-level learners' perceptions of

autonomous learning in Bangladesh. Similar to Bashir's (2014) study, the results revealed that students possessed a highly teacher-dependent attitude. Autonomous learning was found helpful to the students when they were under the constant guidance of a teacher to implement such learning. The learners reported that, in order to become successful autonomous learners, they needed more empathy, assurance, and guidance from teachers. They also indicated that they wanted to have authority in choosing their own homework assignments to take the responsibility for their own learning. Results also revealed the importance of a teacher-guided collaborative environment to make the learners autonomous. These findings suggest that learners desire autonomy in specific aspects of the classroom (i.e., homework assignments), but their desire for autonomy is entirely contingent on the teachers support. The majority of the participants agreed that the ESL teachers need to provide sufficient guidance on how to learn independently and how to take responsibility in their own learning.

While the studies summarized above revealed learners' positive attitudes to autonomous learning, several studies revealed learners' negative attitudes. For example, Begum's (2018) study described in the previous section showed that learners were generally unenthusiastic to autonomous learning in traditional teacher-centered classrooms in Bangladesh. She argued that the traditional learning contexts in Bangladesh were teacher-centered, and these contexts did not contribute to the enhancement of learner autonomy. Learners were mostly teacher-dependent and passive in teacher-dominated classrooms. Based on these findings, Begum (2018) emphasized that, in order to ensure autonomous learning, students have to be motivated. She provided specific techniques that can be used to motivate students (to be presented in the next section).

In another quantitative study using a survey instrument, Begum and Chowdhury (2016) investigated the factors that affected learner autonomy in EFL classrooms at five private

universities in Bangladesh. Results showed that most of the EFL learners had a preference for autonomous learning over teacher-centered learning. It was found that undergraduate English learners were dependent on the teachers for learning English and that the common perception among the learners was that the classroom was the only place to learn English. These findings indicate that participants' preference toward learner autonomy is affected by their attitudes, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Hossain and Mustapha (2020), on the other hand, investigated participants' readiness for learner autonomy and its relationship with English language performance among ESL learners from three public universities in Bangladesh (N = 381). Participants completed a survey asking about their perceptions regarding their readiness for autonomous learning and their English language performance. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between learner autonomy readiness and English language performance. The results also revealed a statistically significant relationship among learner autonomy, motivation, and English language performance. The autonomous and motivated learners showed better performance than those who were less autonomous and less motivated. Interestingly, motivated ESL learners were more autonomous than unmotivated learners. These findings suggest that, in order to promote ESL learners' autonomy, their motivation level needs to be increased. Hossain and Mustapha (2021) suggested that a collaborative teaching and learning atmosphere can enhance learner motivation, which will eventually contribute to the acceleration of learner autonomy and their ESL performance at the tertiary level. Thus, we can infer that there is a reciprocal relationship between learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning.

Techniques to promote learner autonomy in a classroom

The use of technology is becoming increasingly popular in second/foreign language pedagogy globally. For example, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is becoming a popular approach to enhance EFL learner autonomy at tertiary level in Bangladesh. Rahman (2018) conducted a quantitative study that involved 38 tertiary-level English teachers and 200 university students from seven Bangladeshi universities. The participants were tasked with completing a questionnaire. Findings revealed that, since CALL made ESL learning interesting and engaging, learners became more self-dependent. CALL provided opportunities for EFL learners to choose their learning strategies and individualize their materials. Such opportunities facilitated via CALL increased the autonomous choices provided for learners. Furthermore, 73% of the teachers agreed that learner autonomy was accelerated when the EFL learners used computers for learning English. In addition, 92% of the EFL learners believed that CALL promoted learner autonomy. Hence, there is no doubt that CALL activities can promote learner autonomy and that the ESL teachers should use those activities in their classrooms (Rahman, 2018). This study also demonstrated that the absence of computers with internet connections, lack of guidelines, and limited pedagogical materials might hamper autonomous EFL learning in Bangladesh.

In addition, learner autonomy increased corresponding to regular use of technology and library resources. The results of Begum and Chowdhury's (2016) study (see the previous section for details) showed that 62% of the participants used computers for learning English, 66% supported the use of audiovisual equipment to learn English independently, and 46% used library resources that motivated them in independent English language learning. The use of audio-visual systems and multimedia projectors makes English language classes more interesting and

interactive. Similarly, Jamil (2010) provided several useful techniques to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms. He claimed that the use of technology helps learners select their learning strategies. Specifically, the use of a computer, tape-recorder, television, video-recorder, photocopier, fax, and email can enhance the growth of learner autonomy.

Furthermore, Sultana's (2017) mixed-method study revealed specific techniques used to promote learner autonomy among 25 undergraduate students from a leading private university in Bangladesh. This study investigated the plausibility and effectiveness of learner autonomy in ESL learning using a questionnaire, informal interviews, and focused group discussions. During the instruction, the learners were directed through the four stages of autonomous learning – planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. Findings revealed that the ESL learners began to take more responsibility for their own learning after they received the instruction of autonomous learning strategies (Sultana, 2017). In addition, Sultana (2017) reported that, after the intervention, the learners actively participated in the ESL classes, completed classroom activities successfully, completed assignments independently, and used some effective learning strategies. Sultana (2017) demonstrated that the following activities can enhance learners' autonomy: journal writing, dictating new vocabulary and short paragraphs regularly, monitoring learners' independent learning, monitoring the effectiveness of the ESL materials, and acknowledging learner performance. In a similar study, Begum (2018) added that activities and strategies that teachers used to enhance learner autonomy involved small talk, journal writing, using Facebook groups, using the internet and technology, crossword puzzle, jigsaw activity, group debates, group investigation, double-entry journal, newspaper project, and student-teacher consultations (see Begum, 2018 in the previous section for details).

Overall, the literature has revealed that ESL teachers and learners alike had a positive perception and attitude toward autonomous learning at tertiary-level English studies in Bangladeshi universities (Bashir, 2014; Begum, 2018; Begum & Chowdhury, 2016; Sultana, 2016). In addition, there is a growing awareness among ESL teachers and students regarding learner autonomy and, therefore, autonomous learning is becoming increasingly popular in Bangladesh (Begum & Chowdhury, 2016; Hossain & Mustapha, 2021; Jamila, 2013; Rahman, 2018; Sultana, 2017). However, implementation of learner autonomy is still at infant stage in public universities in Bangladesh (see Hossain & Mustapha, 2020 in the previous section), and it can be accelerated by the teachers showing supportive attitude and tolerance. In addition, learner autonomy can be enhanced if the institutions provided necessary logistic support (see Jamila, 2013 in the previous section). All in all, although there are some impediments to the implementation of learner autonomy (i.e., the lack of teacher training and logistic support), learner autonomy can be encouraged in English language pedagogy in Bangladeshi universities.

Building on the existing literature, the present study investigates L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU). Since existing literature has revealed several useful techniques to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms (e.g., technology-assisted learning), in order to apply those techniques, my thesis study first investigates how autonomous learning is perceived by the students in comparison to teacher-centered learning. Findings of the present study can help outline the necessary guidelines for the implementation and application of autonomous learning methods and techniques in language learning classrooms at BSMRSTU. The following three research questions guide the study:

1. What are L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning at BSMRSTU?

2. What are L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning at BSMRSTU?
3. Which approach of learning (autonomous or teacher-centered) is more preferred by the learners at BSMRSTU?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Setting

There are 53 public, 109 private, and three international universities in Bangladesh (see University Grants Commission of Bangladesh). Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) is one of the public universities which was named after the father of the nation. It is located in the rural area of the Gopalganj district in the Dhaka division. There are 34 departments under eight faculties and three institutes that offer bachelor, master and doctorate degrees in different disciplines in this university. The English Department is under the Faculty of Arts and Humanities which offers Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in English and Master of Arts in English literature degrees. In order to complete the bachelor and master programs in English, it usually requires four years and one year respectively. There are 13 faculty members and approximately 350 students in the English Department. Students who enter the Bachelor program in English must first have completed 12 years of prior formal English education.

Participants

Participants in this study were 100 native speakers of Bangla studying English at BSMRSTU (hereafter L2 English learner). 47 of the participants were male students, while 53 of the participants were female students. They ranged in age from 22 to 26 years, with a mean age of 23.66 years ($SD = 0.89$). They started learning English at the age of 4 to 7 years, with a mean age of 5.56 years ($SD = 0.7$). On average, the participants had 15.5 years of prior formal education, suggesting that all of them finished 12 years of secondary and higher secondary education in Bangladeshi standard. All the participants received education in Bangla during their

years of public schooling. 34% of the participants started learning English at home, while 66% started at school. At the time of data collection, 50 students were enrolled in the fourth year of their BA in English and 50 were enrolled in MA programs in the English Department. Table 1 displays demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic information of the participants

	Descriptive statistics
Participants (BA: MA)	50:50
Average age (range, <i>SD</i>)	23.66 (22-26, <i>SD</i> = 0.89)
Gender (male: female)	47:53
Formal English study	15.5 years
Starting age of English learning	5.56 (4-7, <i>SD</i> = 0.7)
Medium of Instruction (Bangla: English)	100:0

Instrument

A survey adopted from Bashir (2014) was used to collect data to measure learners' perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. All of the instructions and statements of the survey were given in English. The survey responses were anonymous as the participants were explicitly instructed not to write their names anywhere in the survey. The survey had two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A elicited demographic information of the participants (i.e., age, gender, program of study, starting age of English learning, duration of formal study of English and medium of instruction in previous education).

Part B of the survey involved 50 Likert-scale statements categorized into two groups. 25 of the statements were designed to elicit students' opinions about autonomous learning. The other 25 statements were designed to elicit responses about teacher-centered learning. For data collection purposes, all the statements were randomized in the survey in which the odd numbers represented autonomous learning items and even numbers represented teacher centered learning items. The respondents were instructed to indicate their agreement with each of the 50 statements according to the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not decided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Appendix A provides a copy of the survey. A few sample items from the Likert-scale survey are below.

Sample items assessing students' preference toward learner-centered learning:

1. I think students should decide their goals and objectives of learning English.
2. I think teachers should give students opportunities to choose materials for learning English in class.
3. I think teachers should give students opportunities to decide where and how to learn English.

Sample items assessing students' preference toward teacher-centered learning:

1. I like the teacher to set my goals and objectives of learning English.
2. I think the teacher should decide where and how students will learn English.
3. I think the teacher should select materials for students in class.

This study employed Holec's (1981) learner autonomy construct as the theoretical framework as found in Bashir (2014). The five dimensions of autonomous learning, i.e., decision making, learning styles and strategies, awareness about the language and the self, assessment and

feedback, and learner initiatives, were used to categorize the 50 statements in the survey. The categorization of the statements is displayed in Table 2-6 below.

Table 2

Decision making

	Item #	Statements
	1	I think students should decide their goals and objectives of learning English.
Autonomous learning	3	I think teachers should give students opportunities to choose materials for learning English in class.
	5	I think teachers should give students opportunities to decide where and how to learn English.
	7	I think teachers should allow students to choose tasks and activities to learn English in class.
	9	I think teachers should allow students to evaluate their performances in class.
	11	I think students are responsible for their own learning.
	2	I like the teacher to set my goals and objectives of learning English.
	4	I think the teacher should select materials for students in class.
Teacher-centered learning	6	I think the teacher should decide where and how students will learn English.
	8	I think the teacher should select the tasks and activities for students in class.

10	I think it is the duty of the teacher to evaluate student performances.
20	I think the teacher should tell students why they are doing an activity in class.

Note: The statements were presented in a randomized order.

Table 3

Learning styles and strategies

	Item #	Statements
Autonomous learning	13	I think teachers should give opportunities to students to learn in their own learning styles.
	15	I think teachers should allow students to learn at their own pace/speed.
	17	I think teachers should allow students to choose their own methods and strategies to learn English effectively.
	19	I know my learning style and use it effectively.
	21	I feel reflection on and thinking about our language learning activities is important for learning English.
Teacher-centered learning	14	I like the teacher to tell students what their learning style is.
	16	I like the teacher to tell students how much time they should spend on an activity.
	18	I like the teacher to tell students what methods and strategies they will use to learn English effectively.

22	I think the teacher should make students think and reflect on their learning.
46	I like the teacher to direct students on how to learn English.

Note: The statements were presented in a randomized order.

Table 4

Awareness about the language and the self

	Item #	Statements
	23	I have a clear idea of what I need English for.
Autonomous learning	25	I know which aspects/areas of my English I need to improve.
	27	I know when I have made a mistake in English.
	29	I know my strengths and weaknesses in English.
	31	I like to look for solutions to my problems of English by myself.
Teacher-centered learning	24	I like the teacher to tell students why English is important to learn.
	26	I like the teacher to tell students which areas they should improve in English.
	28	I like the teacher to tell students when they have made a mistake.
	32	I like the teacher to solve my problems of English.
	42	I think I do not have enough management skills to learn English on my own.

Note: The statements were presented in a randomized order.

Table 5

Assessment and feedback

	Item #	Statements
Autonomous learning	33	I think feedback plays an important role in successful language learning.
	35	I think regular feedback from my classmates on my language learning helps me most.
	37	I think students should monitor and assess their progress of language learning.
	39	I like the opportunity to correct minor mistakes in my work.
Teacher- centered learning	34	I like the teacher to give me regular tests.
	36	I think regular feedback from my teachers on my language learning helps me most.
	38	I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.
	40	I like the teacher to correct all my mistakes.

Note: The statements were presented in a randomized order.

Table 6

Learner initiatives

	Item #	Statements
	41	I think I can learn English in my own way.
Autonomous learning	43	I like trying new things out for learning English by myself.
	45	I think using English outside the classroom is important for developing good language skills.
	47	I think I can find my own opportunities to use the language outside the class.
	49	I think my efforts are important for my successful learning of English.
Teacher-centered learning	12	I think it is important for the teacher to motivate students to learn English.
	30	I need a lot of guidance from the teacher in my learning English.
	44	I depend on the teacher for doing new things to learn English.
	48	I like the teacher to tell me what to do to learn English outside the class.
	50	I think the language teacher plays an important role in my successful learning of English.

Note: The statements were presented in a randomized order.

Data collection procedures

Data collection took place in the summer of 2022, following approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board at the Northern Arizona University (see Appendix B for the copy of

the approval form). Data were collected in two sections of the English classes in BSMRSTU. Printed copies of the survey were provided to the students during class periods. The researcher visited two classes in person and recruited participants by explaining the purpose of the study. All students in the classes agreed to participate in the study. Participants provided their written consent on the printed consent form (see Appendix C for the copy of the consent form). After consenting to the terms of the study, copies of the survey were distributed to the participants. The participants chose the most appropriate response by circling the corresponding number beside each statement. Approximately 10-15 minutes was required for the participants to record their responses to the statements on the survey. During data collection, the researcher stayed in the front of the classroom and collected the signed consent forms and completed surveys from the participants.

Data analysis procedures

This study examined L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. It also investigated whether autonomous or teacher-centered learning was preferred by the learners.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics and a paired *t* test were analyzed using R (R Core Team, 2022). To answer Research Question 1 and 2, item category-wise descriptive statistics were analyzed. In total, there were six item categories: decision making ($k = 6$), learning styles and strategies ($k = 5$), awareness about the language and the self ($k = 5$), assessment and feedback ($k = 4$), learner initiatives ($k = 5$), and all items combined ($k = 50$) (see Table 2-6). Minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation and confidence interval were calculated for each item category.

To answer Research Question 3, a paired samples t test was used to examine the differences between the participants' perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. There were two variables: autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. Under each variable, there were 25 statements. The alpha level was set at 0.05. Prior to the statistical analyses, all statistical assumptions for the paired samples t test were confirmed. Within the data set, there were no extreme outliers. The dependent variables were continuously scaled. The observations were independent of each other.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of this study in regard to three research questions. Descriptive statistics and a paired samples *t* test were used to answer the research questions. Table 7 displays descriptive statistics of survey responses in two main categories: participants' perceptions toward autonomous learning (AL) and teacher-centered learning (TCL). The following section presents findings for each category.

Table 7

Item category wise descriptive statistics

Item category	Min	Max	Mean	SD	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Decision making (<i>k</i> = 6)						
AL	1	5	4.15	0.92	4.08	4.22
TCL	1	5	3.47	1.16	3.38	3.57
Learning styles and strategies (<i>k</i> = 5)						
AL	1	5	4.00	0.97	3.92	4.09
TCL	1	5	3.90	0.98	3.81	3.99
Awareness about the language and the self (<i>k</i> = 5)						
AL	1	5	3.55	1.10	3.46	3.65
TCL	1	5	4.07	0.94	3.98	4.15

Assessment and feedback							
<i>(k = 4)</i>							
AL	1	5	4.29	0.82	4.21	4.37	
TCL	1	5	4.07	1.00	3.97	4.17	
Learner initiatives (<i>k = 5</i>)							
AL	1	5	4.01	1.07	3.91	4.10	
TCL	1	5	4.02	1.08	3.92	4.11	
All items (<i>k = 50</i>)							
AL (<i>k = 25</i>)	1	5	4.00	1.01	3.96	4.03	
TCL (<i>k = 25</i>)	1	5	3.88	1.07	3.84	3.92	

Note. N = 100. AL = Autonomous learning. TCL = Teacher-centered learning

Research Question 1: L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning at

BSMRSTU

The first research question in this study examined L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning at BSMRSTU in Bangladesh. Table 8 displays descriptive statistics of autonomous learning items. Descriptive statistics (see Table 7 and Table 8) revealed that, under autonomous learning approach, assessment and feedback category had the highest mean ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.82$), which indicate that L2 English learners most valued the importance of feedback in successful language learning, the impact of regular feedback from classmates on language learning, the value of self-efforts to monitor and assess self-progress of language learning, and the importance of correcting minor mistakes independently.

In comparison to the assessment and feedback category, these learners had a slightly lower but generally high perception in the decision making category ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.92$). The

statistics showed that the L2 English learners valued their freedom when deciding their goals and objectives of learning English, deciding where and how to learn English, choosing tasks and activities to learn English in class, evaluating their performances in class, getting opportunities to choose materials for learning English in class, and having a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

On the other hand, the category of awareness about the language and the self had the lowest mean ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.10$) under the autonomous learning approach. This means that L2 English learners had a poor perception regarding the necessity of learning English, aspects/areas in English they should improve, their strengths and weaknesses in English, their awareness of the mistakes in English whenever they made, and their self-efforts to look for solutions to problems of English.

In comparison to the awareness about the language and the self category, these learners had higher perception in the category of learning styles and strategies ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.97$). The statistics showed that the L2 English learners had some positive perception about their independence to have opportunities to learn in their own learning styles, to learn at their own pace/speed, to choose their own methods and strategies to learn English effectively, to utilize their learning style effectively, and to have an understanding about language learning activities which are important for learning English.

Table 8

Item wise descriptive statistics of autonomous learning items

Items	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SE	SD	Variance
1. I think students should decide their goals and objectives of learning English.	3	2	5	4.50	.070	.704	.495
3. I think teachers should give students opportunities to choose materials for learning English in class.	3	2	5	4.27	.068	.679	.462
5. I think teachers should give students opportunities to decide where and how to learn English.	3	2	5	4.05	.087	.869	.755
7. I think teachers should allow students to choose tasks and activities to learn English in class.	3	2	5	4.09	.093	.933	.871
9. I think teachers should allow students to evaluate their performances in class.	3	2	5	4.23	.095	.952	.906

11. I think students are responsible for their own learning.	4	1	5	3.76	.113	1.129	1.275
13. I think teachers should give opportunities to students to learn in their own learning styles.	4	1	5	4.16	.098	.982	.964
15. I think teachers should allow students to learn at their own pace/speed.	3	2	5	4.05	.090	.903	.816
17. I think teachers should allow students to choose their own methods and strategies to learn English effectively.	4	1	5	4.03	.099	.989	.979
19. I know my learning style and use it effectively.	4	1	5	3.76	.102	1.016	1.033
21. I feel reflection on and thinking about our language learning activities is important for learning English.	4	1	5	4.01	.095	.948	.899

23. I have a clear idea of what I need English for.	4	1	5	3.46	.106	1.058	1.120
25. I know which aspects/areas of my English I need to improve.	4	1	5	3.77	.104	1.043	1.088
27. I know when I have made a mistake in English.	4	1	5	3.01	.111	1.115	1.242
29. I know my strengths and weaknesses in English.	4	1	5	3.76	.106	1.065	1.134
31. I like to look for solutions to my problems of English by myself.	4	1	5	3.76	.105	1.046	1.093
33. I think feedback plays an important role in successful language learning.	4	1	5	4.60	.065	.651	.424
35. I think regular feedback from my classmates on my language learning helps me most.	4	1	5	4.21	.091	.913	.834

37. I think students should monitor and assess their progress of language learning.	4	1	5	4.11	.080	.803	.644
39. I like the opportunity to correct minor mistakes in my work.	4	1	5	4.25	.081	.809	.654
41. I think I can learn English in my own way.	4	1	5	3.22	.108	1.079	1.163
43. I like trying new things out for learning English by myself.	4	1	5	3.92	.101	1.012	1.024
45. I think using English outside the classroom is important for developing good language skills.	3	2	5	4.66	.057	.572	.328
47. I think I can find my own opportunities to use the language outside the class.	4	1	5	3.72	.111	1.111	1.234

49. I think my efforts are							
important for my							
successful learning of	4	1	5	4.52	.077	.772	.596
English.							

Note. N = 100. Statements are in the same order as presented in Chapter 3.

Research Question 2: L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning at BSMRSTU

The second research question asked L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning at BSMRSTU. Table 9 displays descriptive statistics of teacher-centered learning items. Descriptive statistics (see Table 7 and Table 9) revealed that, under teacher-centered learning approach, both categories of awareness about the language and the self ($M = 4.07, SD = 0.94$) and assessment and feedback ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.00$) had highest means. These results showed that the L2 English learners were more dependent on the teacher to tell them about the importance of learning English and about the areas they should improve in English. They also wanted teachers to tell them when they made a mistake, to solve problems in English, and to manage skills to learn English independently. Additionally, results indicated that the L2 English learners expected regular tests to be administered by the teacher, regular feedback from teachers on learning progress, and correction of mistakes by the teacher.

Similar to the above mentioned categories of awareness about the language and the self and assessment and feedback, in the category of learner initiatives ($M = 4.02, SD = 1.08$), these learners had almost same dependence on the teacher to motivate them to learn English, to guide them in learning English, to try new things to learn English, to guide them about what to do to learn English outside the class, and to be successful in learning English.

On the contrary, under teacher-centered learning approach, decision making category had the lowest mean ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.16$), which indicates that, compared with other categories, the L2 English learners in this study were less dependent on teachers to set goals and objectives of learning English, to select materials in class, to decide where and how they would learn English, to select the tasks and activities in class, to evaluate their performances, and to tell them why they are doing an activity in class.

In comparison to the decision making category, in the category of learning styles and strategies, these learners showed higher dependence on teachers ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.98$). They wanted teachers to find out their learning styles, to budget time on an activity, to inform them the methods and strategies that they should use to learn English effectively, to make them think and reflect on their learning, and to direct them on how to learn English.

Table 9

Item wise descriptive statistics of teacher-centered learning items

Items	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SE	SD	Variance
2. I like the teacher to set my goals and objectives of learning English.	4	1	5	2.62	.129	1.293	1.672
4. I think the teacher should select materials for students in class.	4	1	5	3.48	.105	1.049	1.101
6. I think the teacher should decide where and how students will learn English.	4	1	5	3.13	.112	1.116	1.246
8. I think the teacher should select the tasks and activities for students in class.	4	1	5	3.48	.108	1.078	1.161
10. I think it is the duty of the teacher to evaluate student performances.	3	2	5	4.10	.088	.882	.778
12. I think it is important for the teacher to motivate students to learn English.	3	2	5	4.54	.070	.702	.493

14. I like the teacher to tell students what their learning style is.	4	1	5	3.72	.096	.965	.931
16. I like the teacher to tell students how much time they should spend on an activity.	4	1	5	3.36	.107	1.069	1.142
18. I like the teacher to tell students what methods and strategies they will use to learn English effectively.	3	2	5	4.09	.078	.780	.608
20. I think the teacher should tell students why they are doing an activity in class.	4	1	5	4.03	.082	.822	.676
22. I think the teacher should make students think and reflect on their learning.	4	1	5	4.22	.095	.949	.901
24. I like the teacher to tell students why English is important to learn.	4	1	5	4.27	.080	.802	.644

26. I like the teacher to tell students which areas they should improve in English.	4	1	5	4.26	.077	.774	.598
28. I like the teacher to tell students when they have made a mistake.	4	1	5	4.30	.078	.785	.616
30. I need a lot of guidance from the teacher in my learning English.	4	1	5	4.13	.099	.991	.983
32. I like the teacher to solve my problems of English.	4	1	5	3.99	.100	1.000	1.000
34. I like the teacher to give me regular tests.	4	1	5	4.02	.097	.974	.949
36. I think regular feedback from my teachers on my language learning helps me most.	4	1	5	4.28	.079	.792	.628
38. I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.	4	1	5	4.25	.080	.796	.634

40. I like the teacher to correct all my mistakes.	4	1	5	3.72	.126	1.256	1.577
42. I think I do not have enough management skills to learn English on my own.	4	1	5	3.51	.105	1.049	1.101
44. I depend on the teacher for doing new things to learn English.	4	1	5	2.98	.121	1.214	1.474
46. I like the teacher to direct students on how to learn English.	4	1	5	4.11	.087	.875	.766
48. I like the teacher to tell me what to do to learn English outside the class.	4	1	5	4.00	.086	.865	.747
50. I think the language teacher plays an important role in my successful learning of English.	3	2	5	4.44	.076	.756	.572

Note. N = 100. Statements are in the same order as presented in Chapter 3.

Research Question 3: Comparison between autonomous and teacher-centered approach among L2 English learners at BSMRSTU

The last research question examined the preferred approach of learning (autonomous or teacher-centered) by the learners at BSMRSTU. A paired samples *t* test was used to compare learners' preference for autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning (see Table 10).

Results revealed no significant difference in their preference between these two approaches, $t(24) = .834, p = .413$.

Table 10

Paired samples t test

	Paired Differences				<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	SEM	95% Confidence			
	difference			Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
Pair 1	.1140000	.6835752	.1367150	-.1681660 .3961660	.834	24	.413

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj in Bangladesh. The investigation was motivated by previous findings that both L2 English teachers and learners had a positive perception and attitude toward autonomous learning at tertiary-level English studies in Bangladeshi universities (Bashir, 2014; Begum, 2018; Begum & Chowdhury, 2016; Sultana, 2016). Contrary to the findings from these studies, findings from this study showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of L2 English learners of BSMRSTU regarding their preference between autonomous and teacher-centered learning approaches. They showed similar preferences toward these two approaches.

Interpretations of the findings

The following section presents the interpretation of the findings of this study under three sub-headings: L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning, L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning, and comparison between autonomous and teacher-centered approaches.

L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning

The first research question asked about L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous learning approach at BSMRSTU. Descriptive statistics showed that L2 English learners preferred the autonomous approach in the areas of assessment and feedback. It means that they had a good understanding of the importance of feedback in learning English, specifically, feedback from peers. They learned that self-effort to monitor and assess their own progress in language learning is necessary. Since it is not always practical to depend on teachers for error correction, they seem

to enjoy some freedom to correct minor mistakes on their own whenever they are made. These findings are in line with Bashir (2014) and Begum and Chowdhury (2016) in that L2 English learners had positive perceptions of feedback in learner autonomy.

On the other hand, L2 English learners in this study demonstrated lower awareness of the language and the self under autonomous learning. This finding suggests that they were yet to understand the necessity of learning English well, which indicates that they were not aware of their own needs for learning English. Besides, the learners had limited knowledge about the aspects/areas of improvement in English that they should focus on. In other words, they were not aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in English. Moreover, they were not sufficiently aware of their mistakes in English and how to find solutions to their problems in English on their own. These findings indicate that the value of autonomous learning was not emphasized enough for students in the English Department at BSMRSTU; as a result, the students had limited or no exposure to the autonomous learning approach, especially the aspects of improvement in English and find solutions to their problems in English.

L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning

The second research question examined L2 English learners' perceptions of teacher-centered learning approach. Descriptive statistics revealed that the L2 English learners were generally more dependent on the teacher in growing their awareness about the language and the self, assessment, and feedback. They believed that the English teacher should be the person who tells students about the importance of learning English. Their point of view was that teachers should help them raise awareness about the areas they should improve in English. They also believed that teachers are responsible for teaching them new skills so that they could learn English independently. This finding aligns with that of Bashir's (2014) study which found that,

to become autonomous, L2 English learners needed more empathy, assurance, and guidance from teachers. One reason for this tendency is that these learners were taught following a teacher-centered product-oriented syllabus before the tertiary level; they had the understanding that regular tests administered by the teacher are crucial for their learning.

In summary, the current finding revealed that the students at BSMRSTU rely on teachers' feedback (rather than peer feedback). This finding corroborates Mehrin's (2017) study in which the participants demonstrated a highly teacher-dependent attitude. To interpret this finding, it is worth noting that in the English Department at BSMRSTU, pair and group activities in the classrooms are limited, and the students do not have much experience with peer feedback. One reason for this lack of pair/group activities is a large number of students in the class. Considering the short duration of a class (50 minutes), pair/group activities remain neglected when the class size is usually large in the English Department. So the teachers conduct classes in a lecture method, and it is not possible to listen to every student in the class, essentially hindering autonomous learning. Yet, in order to achieve autonomous learning, they need experience with peer feedback systems. It is possible to establish good peer feedback systems through encouragement, motivation, and support from teachers.

On the contrary, L2 English learners in this study were generally less dependent on teachers in the area of decision-making. Decision-making is the critical part of the process of becoming autonomous, and the learners in this study demonstrated some self-confidence in decision-making skills. The finding indicates that they were comfortable with setting goals and objectives for learning English. They were becoming aware of their individual interests or topics of academic and intellectual interest. Thus they seem to be able to select materials in class on their own, as well as the tasks they need to accomplish in the classroom. This finding aligns with

Bashir's (2014) and Mehrin's (2017) findings since participants in both studies were willing to take charge of their own learning, materials, and classroom activities. In Bashir's (2014) study, ESL learners were even partially able to self-evaluate their own performances. However, this finding contradicts with Jamila's (2013) study in which teachers confessed that the ESL learners were not permitted to select their learning materials and evaluate their own language performance.

Overall, findings from the first two research questions demonstrated mixed results in terms of L2 English learners' perceptions of the autonomous learning approach. They showed positive understanding of the importance of autonomous learning and mental readiness toward this approach. This was shown in Table 7 in Chapter 4. The findings suggest that, if they truly desire to be autonomous, their positive attitude may work as the foundation based on which they develop autonomous learning practices and strategies. On the other hand, L2 English learners in this study also showed inability to implement their ideas of autonomous learning and take responsibility for their own learning. For example, although they demonstrated the highest perception regarding the importance of assessment and feedback in autonomous learning, they were also dependent on teachers on these two aspects. Another example is that, although they reported that they were able to set a learning path and use learner-generated content, they were not very aware of their own needs for learning English. Thus, L2 English learners in this study had ambivalent perceptions regarding their learning approach (autonomous or teacher-centered), which might not be instrumental to their academic success. Success in foreign language learning requires a comprehensive understanding of the learning approach that the learners follow. The learners' ambivalence becomes clearer when we compare their perceptions of autonomous and teacher-centered learning approaches.

Comparison between autonomous and teacher-centered approach

The third research question investigated whether L2 English learners preferred autonomous learning or teacher-centered learning. A paired samples *t* test revealed no significant difference in their preference between these two approaches. The reasons for this finding could be twofold.

First, during public schooling, all the participants in this study received education from Bangla medium institutions, and no one received English-medium instructions. The instruction medium was exclusively Bangla in public schooling. Before entering the tertiary level, they had only one or two courses in English in every grade. Since all other courses are taught in Bangla, it is possible that learners in this study became more dependent on teachers to develop their English competence when they entered the university. Yet, after they had completed at least three years of tertiary education taught in English at BSMRSTU, they were gradually shifting toward more autonomous learning, resulting in similar preferences between the autonomous and teacher-centered approach at the time of data collection. These findings do not support Bashir's (2014) findings since participants of his study preferred autonomous learning over traditional teacher-centered instruction. The reason for this difference could be that Bashir's (2014) study involved participants from a major public university in Bangladesh, whereas participants of this study were from a peripheral university located in a rural area of Bangladesh. Bashir's participants are privileged in the sense that they are studying at a major public university in Bangladesh located in a divisional city. It is possible that, in comparison with peripheral universities, the major public universities in Bangladesh have more expert teachers. As a result, the students of a major public university are supposed to receive better instruction, exposure,

educational resources and technological support from their institution that makes a difference in their perceptions regarding learning approaches.

Second, since Bangladesh is a English as a foreign language context, the learners are not expected to use English outside the classroom. Even in the English classes at BSMRSTU, a mix of Bangla and English is used to deliver instruction and most of the communication. Hence, L2 English learners are highly dependent on teachers for their English study. On the other hand, students in this study are exposed to technology-mediated learning (e.g., using social media) in their classes at BSMRSTU. It is possible that, with the advantage of technology and social media, they became able to understand that active learning—made possible by autonomous learning—is required for learning English, which led to similar preferences between the autonomous and teacher-centered approach found in this study.

To conclude, this study found a balanced perception of autonomous and teacher-centered approaches among L2 English learners at BSMRSTU. They were neither completely autonomous nor teacher dependent. Since autonomous learning makes learners to become proactive being in charge of their own learning, it should be highly encouraged in L2 teaching and learning context. Autonomous learning is beneficial not only for L2 English learning but also for education as a whole; the autonomous approach can help produce competent learners who are able to attain cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural enrichment and who can take responsibility for self-learning. Although there are some challenges, it can be asserted that L2 English learners at BSMRSTU are thriving toward autonomous learning which will also contribute to the sustainable development of Bangladesh. However, as shown in the current results, students also prefer the teacher-centered approach at the same level. Hence, faculty members in the English Department of BSMRSTU can gradually familiarize the learners with

autonomous learning and its importance in learning English. Once the learners understand the value of autonomous learning, it will be the high time to outline some plausible guidelines for the implementation and application of autonomous learning in English classrooms at BSMRSTU.

Limitations and future directions

Based on the limitations of the present study, several implications for future research are proposed. First, this study only focused on the quantitative analyses of learner perceptions of autonomy. A qualitative or mixed-method approach could produce more insights regarding L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomous and teacher-centered approach. The data collection tool employed in this study was a survey that was adopted from Bashir (2014) to measure learners' perceptions of autonomous learning and teacher-centered learning. In future research, qualitative data could also be collected using observations, interviews, and focus group discussion. Second, there was no piloting of the survey conducted before the data collection of this study. A piloting of the survey indicates the degree of effectiveness of the tool before actual data collection. Hence, it is advisable to pilot the survey beforehand, adding to the reliability and validity of the instrument. Last but not least, this study did not employ a purposeful sampling. Participants were selected from the fourth year of BA and MA programs only. As a result, a significant portion of the population from the first, second, and third years of the BA program remained unrepresented in the pool of participants. Hence, in future research, a purposeful sampling could be used to increase the representativeness of the sampling. For example, 20 participants could be selected from each of the five years of BA and MA programs in the English Department of BSMRSTU based on their academic performance in their respective programs.

Much work still remains to be done in this line of research. While working toward this thesis, I have come up with some new areas of learner autonomy that might be investigated in the future. Besides learner perceptions of autonomy, it is also important to investigate teacher perceptions of autonomous and teacher-centered approaches at BSMRSTU. This is an important future direction because the effective implementation of autonomous learning will require concerted efforts from both teachers and learners. Literature review of this study revealed that teachers needed some commitment and freedom to promote learner autonomy in their English classrooms (Begum, 2018). If teachers practice traditional teaching methods in their classrooms like those in Jamila's (2013) study, learners are not able to develop positive attitude and perceptions toward autonomous learning. Hence, it warrants a study at BSMRSTU on L2 English teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. Such a study should yield a comprehensive view of their perspectives on this approach of learning.

Future research can also investigate the effectiveness of content-based instruction (CBI) approach in enhancing learner autonomy. CBI focuses on the instruction of content (substance or subject matter taught to the learners) or information (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Making the learners autonomous and capable of taking the responsibility for self-learning is one important goal of CBI. Therefore, the effectiveness of CBI in promoting learner autonomy can be investigated in the basic English language courses at BSMRSTU.

Another important future direction is to investigate the relationship between multiple intelligences and learner autonomy. Multiple intelligence (MI) is a learner-based philosophy which identifies multiple dimensions of human intelligence. According to Gardner's (1993) MI theory, there are different types of intelligence, such as naturalistic, bodily/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, and visual/spatial

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Since both MI theory and autonomous learning approach are learner centered, there is ample scope to conduct research in this area. In order to promote autonomous learning practices, it is important to keep learners informed of their most functioning intelligence types in L2 English learning.

Last but not the least, the relationship between L2 learners' perceptions of autonomous learning and English proficiency will be an important area of future research. We can closely examine high proficiency learners in class to determine whether they prefer autonomous learning or teacher-centered learning. Learners might be motivated to practice autonomous learning if they find that autonomous learning can lead to higher English proficiency. Such a study will help L2 English learners, teachers and policymakers to make more informed pedagogical decisions.

Pedagogical implications

This study has produced crucial pedagogical implications for English language teaching and learning at BSMRSTU. The findings of this study warrant close attention from both L2 English learners and stakeholders. Both teachers and students should be dedicated to making English language learning as an autonomous experience. By making students autonomous, teachers can make a difference in students' English language learning experiences and provide them with opportunities to explore their multiple intelligences. It is urgent for L2 English learners to develop self-efficacy, positive self-esteem, and critical and creative thinking skills. Hence, both parties—teachers and students— should make this attempt with optimism and confidence.

Technology-enhanced tools such as corpora and digital dictionaries can be used to make learners autonomous. Corpora is the electronic collections of naturally occurring texts. For example, Corpus of Contemporary American English and Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken

English are two of the popular corpora of American English which are available free of cost. If the learners are familiarized with how to use a corpus, it will certainly decrease their dependence on teachers to learn English. Teachers can develop pedagogical materials using corpora. In addition to corpora, digital dictionaries can help learners learn high frequency vocabulary with accurate pronunciation and grammatical structures, which can enrich their English learning experience. Digital dictionaries can also reduce learners' over reliance on teachers to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures. Moreover, integrating Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) into L2 English pedagogy is advisable to promote learner autonomy. CALL can be arguably a potentially useful approach to developing learner autonomy since Rahman's (2018) study revealed that 92% of the EFL learners believed that CALL promoted learner autonomy. With the assistance of computer, L2 English learners can engage in self-learning and find answers on their own without asking questions to teachers, leading to autonomous learning.

The administration at BSMRSTU can organize teacher training and seminar on learner autonomy from time to time. Renowned scholars of autonomous learning from home and abroad can be invited to train teachers of the English Department in the form of professional development programs. A series of workshops on autonomous learning will be helpful to establish autonomous practices in the department. Additionally, there are online courses on autonomous learning offered by the top higher education institutions around the world. L2 English teachers can participate in these courses so they can learn more about autonomous learning. Students in the English Department at BSMRSTU also need to be trained in autonomous learning since their perceptions indicated that they lack training in autonomous learning practices. Once teachers are trained, they will be able to train their students as well.

When teachers receive expertise on autonomous learning approach, they should then work on student-based curriculum in collaboration with expert curriculum developers. They should design syllabus and assessment systems of both BA and MA programs in the English Department with an emphasis on learner autonomy. They can choose between product-oriented and process-oriented syllabus to ensure learner autonomy. Moreover, teachers should design the classroom activities and develop materials based on autonomous learning approach.

Finally, the findings of this study have pedagogical implications beyond the context of BSMRSTU. The findings from this study can provide teachers with a better understanding of learners' perceptions and insights regarding learner autonomy in all Bangladeshi universities. Since some challenges were found in implementing autonomous learning, L2 English teachers might proceed gradually to promote learner autonomy in their classes. Institutions in Bangladesh might consider the findings of this study to make their English language programs more successful. By making students autonomous, teachers can provide students with a competitive edge which will help them achieve employment opportunities at global-level. There are unlimited opportunities for a global job market for competent English graduates. Autonomous learning can help learners become competitive in such a global job market.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Copy of the Survey

Investigating English language learners' perceptions of autonomy in a Bangladeshi university

A. Please fill in the blanks given below with information about yourself. Do NOT write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.

- a. Age: _____ b. Gender: _____ c. Program and Year _____ d. Highest academic qualification: _____ e. When did you begin learning English (age): _____
f. How did you learn English (at school/at home, or some other way)? _____
g. Were you educated in English medium schools or in some other? (specify _____)

B. Please mark the appropriate number from 1 to 5 depending on your degree of agreement and disagreement with the statement given, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

No	Statements	5 strongly agree	4 agree	3 not decided	2 disagree	1 strongly disagree
1.	I think students should decide their goals and objectives of learning English.					
2.	I like the teacher to set my goals and objectives of learning English.					
3.	I think teachers should give students opportunities to choose materials for learning English in class.					
4.	I think the teacher should select materials for students in class.					
5.	I think teachers should give students opportunities to decide where and how to learn English.					

6.	I think the teacher should decide where and how students will learn English.					
7.	I think teachers should allow students to choose tasks and activities to learn English in class.					
8.	I think the teacher should select the tasks and activities for students in class.					
9.	I think teachers should allow students to evaluate their performances in class.					
10.	I think it is the duty of the teacher to evaluate student performances.					
11.	I think students are responsible for their own learning.					
12.	I think it is important for the teacher to motivate students to learn English.					
13.	I think teachers should give opportunities to students to learn in their own learning styles.					
14.	I like the teacher to tell students what their learning style is.					
15.	I think teachers should allow students to learn at their own pace/speed.					
16.	I like the teacher to tell students how much time they should spend on an activity.					
17.	I think teachers should allow students to choose their own methods and strategies to learn English effectively.					
18.	I like the teacher to tell students what methods and strategies they will use to learn English effectively.					
19.	I know my learning style and use it effectively.					

20.	I think the teacher should tell students why they are doing an activity in class.					
21.	I feel reflection on and thinking about our language learning activities is important for learning English.					
22.	I think the teacher should make students think and reflect on their learning.					
23.	I have a clear idea of what I need English for.					
24.	I like the teacher to tell students why English is important to learn.					
25.	I know which aspects/areas of my English I need to improve.					
26.	I like the teacher to tell students which areas they should improve in English.					
27.	I know when I have made a mistake in English.					
28.	I like the teacher to tell students when they have made a mistake.					
29.	I know my strengths and weaknesses in English.					
30.	I need a lot of guidance from the teacher in my learning English.					
31.	I like to look for solutions to my problems of English by myself.					
32.	I like the teacher to solve my problems of English.					
33.	I think feedback plays an important role in successful language learning.					
34.	I like the teacher to give me regular tests.					
35.	I think regular feedback from my classmates on my language learning helps me most.					

36.	I think regular feedback from my teachers on my language learning helps me most.					
37.	I think students should monitor and assess their progress of language learning.					
38.	I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.					
39.	I like the opportunity to correct minor mistakes in my work.					
40.	I like the teacher to correct all my mistakes.					
41.	I think I can learn English in my own way.					
42.	I think I do not have enough management skills to learn English on my own.					
43.	I like trying new things out for learning English by myself.					
44.	I depend on the teacher for doing new things to learn English.					
45.	I think using English outside the classroom is important for developing good language skills.					
46.	I like the teacher to direct students on how to learn English.					
47.	I think I can find my own opportunities to use the language outside the class.					
48.	I like the teacher to tell me what to do to learn English outside the class.					
49.	I think my efforts are important for my successful learning of English.					
50.	I think the language teacher plays an important role in my successful learning of English.					

Appendix B

IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board for the
Human Research Protection Program

525 S Beaver St
PO Box: 4062
Flagstaff AZ 86011
928-523-9551
<https://www.nau.edu/IRB>

To: Sheikh Md Muniruzzaman, MA
From: NAU IRB Office
Approval Date: July 19, 2022

Project: Investigating L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy in a university in Bangladesh
Project Number: 1919179-2
Submission: Revision
Action: APPROVED
Project Risk Level: MINIMAL RISK
Approval Expiration Date: July 19, 2027

Review Category/ies: **The project is not federally funded or supported and has been deemed to be no more than minimal risk.**

This project has been reviewed and approved by an IRB Chair or designee.

- Northern Arizona University maintains a Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (FWA #00000357).
- All research procedures should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the guidance.
- The Principal Investigator should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that affect the protocol and report any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others. Please refer to Guidance Investigators Responsibility after IRB Approval, Reporting Local Information and Minimal Risk or Exempt Research.
- All documents referenced in this submission have been reviewed and approved. Documents are filed with the HRPP Office within IRBNet. If subjects will be consented, the approved consent(s) are available within IRBNet upon approval notification from the HRPP Office.

Important

The principal investigator for this study is responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals before commencing research. Please be sure that you have satisfied applicable external and University requirements, for example (but not limited to) data repositories, listserv permission, records request, data use agreement, [conducting University surveys](#), [data security](#), [international](#), [conflicts of interest](#), [biological safety](#), [radiation safety](#), [HIPAA](#), [FERPA](#), [FDA](#), [sponsor approval](#), [clinicaltrials.gov](#), [tribal consultation](#), or [school approval](#). IRB approval does not convey approval to commence research in the event that other requirements have not been satisfied.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form



Office of Research Compliance

Project Number: 1919179-2
Approval Date: July 19, 2022
This stamp must be on all
consenting documents



Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Investigating L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy in a university in Bangladesh

Principal Investigator: Sheikh Md. Muniruzzaman

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. **Your decision to participate in this study or not will not influence your relationship with the teacher or institution or your course evaluation/grade.** Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

This study will investigate L2 English learners' perceptions of autonomy at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Bangladesh. The expected duration of the study is nine months. Students studying in the English Department in the aforementioned university are eligible to participate in the study.

There are no expected risks to you as a result of participating in this study. You will not benefit directly from participating in this study. There is no extra credit for the study participation. You will receive a survey to complete which will ask you to respond to 50 Likert-scale questions by indicating your degree of agreement with each statement. It will take about 10 minutes for you to complete the survey.

Your name will not be used in any report. The information that you give in the study will be anonymous. Your name will not be collected or linked to your answers. Your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you. Information collected about you will not be used or shared for future research studies.

The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. Northern Arizona University Institutional Review Board may review the research records for monitoring purposes.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact the Principal Investigator.

NAU Adult Consent Non-Federally Funded

V Mar 2020

Consent Version: 07/19/2022

Page 1 of 2



Project Number: 1919179-2
Approval Date: July 19, 2022
This stamp must be on all
consenting documents



Office of Research Compliance

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Research Protection Program at 928-523-9551 or online at <http://nau.edu/Research/Compliance/Human-Research/Welcome/>.

Thanking you,

Sheikh Md. Muniruzzaman
Graduate Teaching Assistant
English Department | MA TESL
Northern Arizona University
Email: sm3885@nau.edu

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Printed name of subject

Signature of subject

Date