

Bangladeshi English Teachers' Understanding of Teacher Autonomy

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Abstract : This paper reports some findings of a study on the issues related to teacher autonomy in the Bangladeshi school contexts, and data of this research was collected from fourteen practicing English teachers of Bangladesh through semi structured interviews. The theoretical underpinning of teacher autonomy, on an apparent note, focuses on the behavioral aspects of teacher autonomy hence emphasizing mostly on the teachers' capacity for self-directed acts of teaching and self-directed acts of professional development. Yet, a contemporary literature survey of teacher autonomy seems to be concerned more on the political interpretations of teacher autonomy. Thus, autonomous teachers are expected to generate their personal theories of teaching from their practices. The idea of personal theories of practice upholds the view that along with the teaching, teachers need to engage themselves in various classroom based research with a view to theorising from their practices. The findings of this research indicate enormous evidence of behavioral aspects of teacher autonomy. As the data of this research suggests, the participant teachers' understanding of classroom situations, their reflections on the situational realities and opting for classroom decisions on the basis of those realizations are some good examples of teacher autonomy. Also, a few teachers' stated teaching practices seem to reflect, though in a subtle way, their effort of outlining context embedded personal theories of teaching. This paper has got one significant pedagogical implication for the teacher education. Any teacher education must promote the conditions and capabilities for the present and prospective teachers for the role of theorists in addition to develop their professional, procedural, and personal knowledge base.

Keywords : personal theories of practice, self-directed acts of professional development, self-directed acts of teaching, teacher autonomy

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