

Doctoral Dissertation

KOBE CITY UNIVERSITY of FOREIGN STUDIES

Learner Autonomy in Elementary School English Classrooms:

Japanese and Dutch Teachers' Perceptions

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小学校の英語の授業における学習者の自律性：

日本とオランダの教員の認識

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Abstract

The role of elementary school teachers in the development of students' autonomy is critical for students to learn English and become global human resources. Although Japanese and Dutch governments have included the development of student autonomy as part of their educational goals, there is a huge difference in the student's English proficiency. The reason for this difference is expected to be the diverging viewpoints of teachers in both countries about fostering student autonomy. Using a mixed methods design, this doctoral dissertation examines the perceptions of English teachers regarding learners' autonomy in Japanese and Dutch elementary schools. Quantitatively, the questionnaire survey targeted 61 teachers each from Japan and the Netherlands. It consisted of Admiraal et al.'s (2019) 39 five-point Likert scale questions—analyzed using multiple regression analysis after confirmatory factor analysis—and 5 open-ended questions—analyzed using KH Coder and grounded theory approach. The qualitative analysis was conducted in a series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with five Japanese teachers and online interviews with five Dutch teachers, analyzed using the modified grounded theory approach. Moreover, the textbooks and teachers' manuals for third to sixth grades were analyzed from the learner autonomy's perspective, using a checklist combining Reeve's (2016) three critical motivational moments of autonomy-supportive teaching and Reinders' (2010) eight autonomy aspects. The results showed that Japanese and Dutch elementary school teachers had common perceptions of

learner autonomy for six aspects (namely, freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence), which aligned with Admiraal et al.'s (2019) findings. However, unlike Dutch teachers, Japanese teachers lacked the awareness to foster students' responsibility for their learning. Teachers from both countries presented "collaborative group work" as a characteristic of their countries. However, Japanese teachers were likely to consolidate different opinions into one, whereas Dutch teachers were likely to respect different opinions. It was interpreted that these variations resulted in differences in how students developed their autonomy, influencing the difference in English proficiency. Although Japan and the Netherlands have different educational backgrounds and cultures, the goal for students to learn English is the same. Therefore, Japanese and Dutch teachers need to devise tailored methods for their country's contexts to help students learn English autonomously while increasing their motivation through dialogue at each learning stage.

Keywords: learner autonomy, elementary school, teachers' roles, Japan, the Netherlands

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Aim of the Study

Among the elementary schools where the researcher of the present study works as a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE), there are some schools that conspicuously advocate students' autonomy or autonomous learning as a key of school education goal. Autonomy leads to the production of global human resources. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) in Japan has discussed the need to develop global human resources for decades. According to MEXT (2012), the definitions of global human resources are as follows:

1. Linguistic and communication skills
2. Self-direction and positivity, a spirit for challenge, cooperativeness, and flexibility, and a sense of responsibility and mission
3. Understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as a Japanese¹

The first definition suggests that a Japanese person must be able to use English as a lingua franca, or as a communication tool. In the second definition, MEXT (2012) presents the concepts of self-direction and positivity and a sense of responsibility. It can be interpreted

¹ MEXT (2012) announced these definitions of global human resources in Japanese, and the English translation was referred to the website of the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education, 2021, <https://niadqe.jp/>. They introduce global human resources in both Japanese and English which were proposed by the Council on Promotion of Human Resources for Globalization Development. This council was established by the Japanese government in 2011 and set until 2012.

that students need to learn autonomously because self-direction and taking responsibility are defined as autonomy or autonomous learning (see Section 2.2).

In 2006, MEXT (2006) listed the five educational goals in its Basic Act on Education, and one of the goals is as follows:

Developing individual's abilities, cultivating creativity, and fostering a spirit of autonomy and independence by respecting the value of the individual, as well as emphasizing the relationship between one's career and one's everyday life and fostering the value of respect for hard work. (MEXT translation)

In addition, this objective is stated in the preamble of the new Course of Study (MEXT, 2017a, 2017b). It can be interpreted that MEXT seeks to develop autonomy while respecting the abilities of individual students, "fostering a spirit of autonomy and independence by respecting the value of the individual" in the above objective. Combining this goal with the definition of global human resources by MEXT (2012), it can be interpreted that MEXT aims to develop autonomous English-proficient learners as global human resources.

However, according to an English proficiency survey conducted by an international language education institution EF Education First (2022), the Netherlands ranked first, and Japan ranked 80th out of 111 participating countries in 2022. In Japan, English education officially began as a subject for fifth and sixth graders in 2020 at elementary schools, although English as a foreign language (EFL) activity has been implemented in 2011 for fifth

and sixth graders. In 2011, when English education began in Japanese elementary schools, Japan was ranked 14th in the EF Education First survey. Since then, however, the ranking has been gradually declining year by year. It is now assumed that there is a gap between the goal of MEXT to foster global human resources and the reality of the English competence of Japanese students.

On the contrary, in the Netherlands, English education began in elementary schools in the early 1970s and became a compulsory subject for 10-year-old students in 1986 (Wilhelm, 2018). Therefore, according to the European Commission (2012), 94% of the population is bilingual. Furthermore, 77% of Dutch citizens can communicate in two or three additional foreign languages. Hence, “the level of multilingualism in the Netherlands is amongst the highest in Europe” (Jeffery & van Beuningen, 2020, p. 176). In the EF Education First survey, the Netherlands has been ranked first for 4-years in a row (English Hub, 2022).

The difference in the English proficiency of elementary school students in these two countries raises the question of how Japanese and Dutch elementary school teachers recognize the autonomy of their students and how they support them in developing students’ autonomy. Moreover, differences, if any, might influence students’ ability to achieve their English language learning goals.

Regarding the language differences, the Japanese language is independent and does not belong to any particular language group, whereas the Dutch language belongs to the West

Germanic language group, which also includes English. Despite differences in structure and grammar, this language group is considered to be somehow connected by one language or parent language (DutchTrans, 2022). Therefore, compared with Japanese students who speak their independent language, Dutch students have fewer barriers to learning English.

However, the researcher of the present study would like to reiterate that Japanese children must be able to use English with foreign people around the world as global human resources in the future. In other words, although Japan and the Netherlands have different cultural and language backgrounds, the goal of learning English is the same to master English as a *lingua franca*. To that end, it is meaningful to examine how teachers support students in increasing their autonomy in English education in elementary schools, where students are exposed to English as a subject for the first time, in Japan and the Netherlands.

The purpose of this study is to compare teachers' perceptions of learners' autonomy in English classes in Japanese and Dutch elementary schools. For this purpose, the researcher used a mixed research method: a questionnaire for Japanese and Dutch teachers as a quantitative study, semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers as a qualitative analysis, and an analysis of Japanese and Dutch textbooks and teacher manuals (see Chapter 3).

1.2 Motivation for this Study

The researcher of this study, who is a private-school English teacher, frequently hears from the students that the inability of Japanese people to speak English is to blame for their difficulty to learn the language. However, based on the researcher's personal experience of self-directed study of English since sixth grade, she has recognized that the responsibility for learning lies with the learners themselves. Nevertheless, this is the researcher's personal view, because she has been interested in English since elementary school.

According to Benson (2001), students need to develop autonomy to be effective language learners. When students learn autonomously, they not only successfully learn a language but also develop a sense of responsibility, and as a result, become critical members of the society. Some students do this naturally; however, most of them need to be taught or nurtured. The researcher believes that it must be teachers who will teach while nurturing learners' autonomy. Thus, to foster learners' autonomy and make English education successful, it is necessary to explore the perception of learner autonomy among elementary school English teachers. Nevertheless, the question remains that if teachers realize they need to nurture learners' autonomy, MEXT (2006) clarifies that teachers should do it, and teachers even know what autonomy is. These questions lead the researcher of the present study to explore the perception of learner autonomy among elementary school teachers.

Many researchers and scholars in the field of second language acquisition in Japan and worldwide recognize Holec's (1981) view of autonomy, who advocated the importance of learner autonomy in second language acquisition and defined learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3) (Fukuda, 2007; Lennon, 2012; Little, 2003, 2004a; Palfreyman, 2003; Sakai & Takagi, 2009). Holec (1980) claimed that autonomy, which includes language education, is the goal of education. In other words, it is no exaggeration that the success of language learning depends on learners' autonomy.

However, Palfreyman (2003) has stated that some researchers (e.g., Atkinson, 1999; Ho & Crookall, 1995) argue that "the concept of autonomy itself may be ethnocentric and culturally inappropriate to non-Western cultures" (p. 7). On the contrary, according to Palfreyman, "Dickinson (1996) and Sinclair (1997) suggest that different interpretations of autonomy are appropriate in different cultural contexts" (p. 7). This does not mean that autonomy is not suitable in non-European countries but rather it means that there is a perception of autonomy in line with the cultural background of the country. In this context, Sakai and Takagi (2009) quote Littlewood's (1999) assertion as follows: Asian students possess equivalent levels of autonomy as their peers in Western nations, and some teachers have noted that the effectiveness of their efforts in fostering autonomy among Asian learners (e.g., Morimoto, 2006; Wakui, 2006).

Fukano et al. (2007) investigated how teachers can foster students' autonomy in English classes in Japanese elementary schools, that is, teachers can activate students' self-awareness to the importance of learning a language and utilizing their existing knowledge. Their study concluded that students' autonomy can be nurtured by providing them with a conducive environment that they can learn with a peace of mind.

In English classrooms, teachers must effectively support students' autonomous learning so that they can proactively express the English proficiency they cultivated in the school in a global society because "autonomy is the key to life-long learning" (Egel, 2009, p. 2023). However, Japanese students tend to take English classes passively, that is, they are only following the teacher's instructions. Cooker (2018) expressed that Japan has traditionally adopted teacher-centered and grammar-oriented approaches, where the teacher takes responsibility for the student's learning.

Even though most Japanese students have taken compulsory English classes for 6 years through junior high school and high school before English education was implemented in elementary schools, they expressed that the English they learned is for university entrance examinations (*juken eigo*) and cannot be used as a communication tool. Tatsuki (2019) provided a historical context for Butler and Iino's (2005) argument that English education in Japan mainly focused on reading and writing, rather than as a means of communication. Consequently, *juken eigo* has become the goal of school education.

Regarding the quality of English education in Japan, a survey involving Japanese parents (n = 1000) with minor children revealed that 86.6% were not satisfied with Japanese English education (Rakuten Research, 2012). As a specific dissatisfaction point, 68.8% of the respondents answered: “Class content cannot improve practical English proficiency.”

According to another survey of Japanese high school students (n = 538) regarding English learning, 11.3% responded that they were not good at English in their elementary school days. This response was common among seventh graders during the first half of the school year (18.2%) (Benesse, 2019).

Thus, those Japanese people are not confident in their English proficiency since they were young and are likely to blame the poor quality of English education in Japanese schools. However, they might not blame the English education if the ability to learn autonomously was cultivated in English classrooms. This is because autonomous learners can manage their learning, as stated by Holec (1981).

Little (2004b) claimed that autonomous learners do things by themselves. Learner autonomy therefore needs full involvement of the learner in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of their learning. However, for young EFL learners to be autonomous learners, teachers always have a decisive role to play in building and sustaining the learning communities for which they are responsible. In other words, appropriate teacher support is

essential for students to become autonomous learners; therefore, teachers must strive to create and maintain an environment where students can become autonomous learners (Little, 2003).

According to Sakai and Takagi (2009), the highest priority goal in education is to foster learners' autonomy of students who have no experience in autonomous learning. Therefore, as some students lack autonomy because it is natural to learn passively, many educators, such as English teachers, should focus on developing their autonomy. In Japan, the teachers were not familiar with the term learner autonomy until recently. They insist that Japanese teachers must note the difference between education settings in Western countries, where the notion of learner autonomy was born, and Japanese educational settings. Therefore, Japanese teachers need to develop learner autonomy in a way that suits the context of the Japanese learning environment, that is, a teacher-centered class.

When Sakai and Takagi published their 2009 paper, they said that research on learner autonomy in Japan was scarce. Researchers find it challenging to refer to previous research around that time, especially that which focused on young Japanese EFL learners. Recently, however, studies focusing on the importance of developing autonomy for young EFL learners are gradually increasing (e.g., Nagakura, 2023; Takai et al., 2020; Uchiyama & Someya, 2020). Yet, these research papers are in Japanese owing to the assumption that the target readers are Japanese English educators or researchers.

On the contrary, in the Netherlands, research related to learner autonomy has been conducted earlier than in Japan. The researcher of the present study found some research related to learner autonomy in the Netherlands around and after the 1990s. For instance, Nekoda (1999) argued that English classes in Dutch primary education focused on communicative skills and autonomous learning of students. In addition, Dousma (2000) investigated teachers' views on learner autonomy. Furthermore, Nekoda (2018) investigated how teachers' reflection is important for students' independence and autonomy in English classes in the Netherlands. According to Admiraal et al. (2019), "In the Netherlands, student autonomy is in the spotlight in educational policies, research, and practice" (p. 1). Therefore, the concept of autonomy has been emphasized much earlier than in Japan.

Even though there are considerable differences in English proficiency between Japan and the Netherlands, not many studies can be found comparing teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy in these two countries to achieve educational goals. Therefore, this research will provide meaningful results that compared students' autonomy in English classes of Japanese and Dutch elementary schools. The researcher's motivation for this research can be attributed to her aspiration that educators will integrate the results of this research in their own educational settings.

1.3 Contextual Background of the Study

This section describes the background of the concept of learner autonomy. According to Palfreyman (2003), the concept of learner autonomy has developed in the European continent (see Section 2.3.1 for details); however, other researchers claimed that the notion of autonomy has deep historical roots in Eastern philosophies (Egel, 2009). In European countries, especially in the Netherlands, autonomy is valued not only in foreign language education but also in school education including among parents, teachers, and school boards (Hooge, 2017). The Netherlands is a model country for successful English education while fostering students' autonomy.

The present study compares the perceptions of learner autonomy between Japanese and Dutch teachers in different educational contexts, answering the research questions mentioned in Chapter 2. The following subsections clarify the education systems in Japan and the Netherlands, the transition of English education in both countries, and English proficiencies of Japanese and Dutch EFL learners.

1.3.1 Overview of the Japanese Education

This subsection explores the Japanese education system, historical background of Japanese English education, and current English proficiency of Japanese EFL learners.

1.3.1.1 The Education System in Japan

The modern education system of Japan began with the promulgation of the school system in 1872. Later, in 1946, the basic national educational policy was set by the Japanese Constitution, as follows:

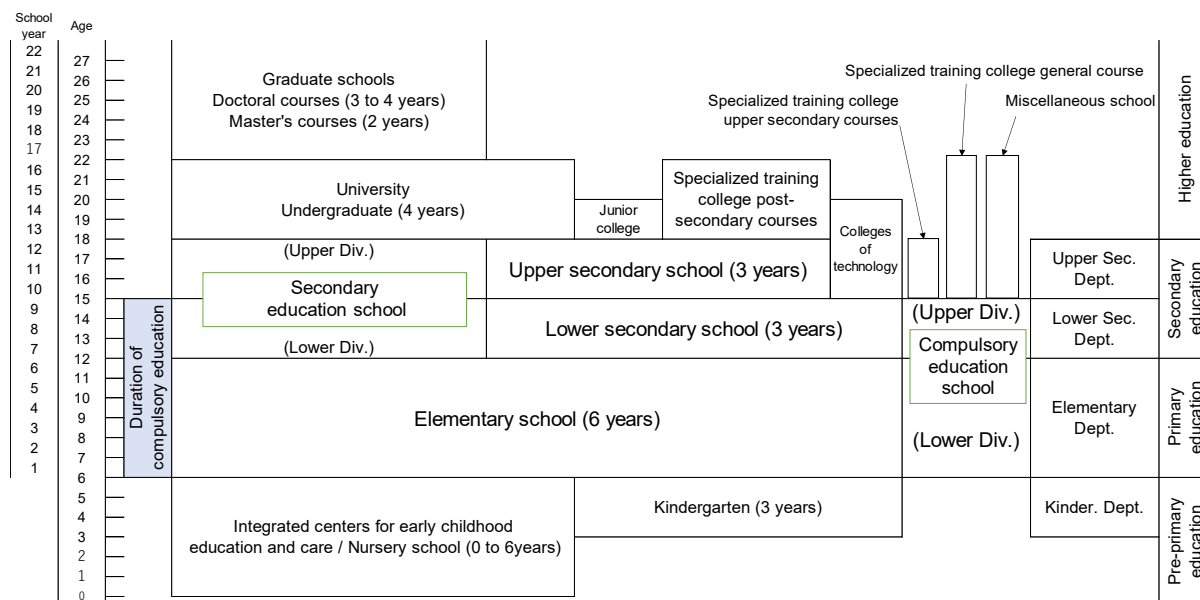
All people shall have the right to receive an equal education corresponding to their ability, as provided by law. All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free (Article 26). (MEXT, 2009a)

In 1947, the Fundamental Law and the School Education Law were enacted. Some factors were adopted from some European models; however, they have been mainly patterned on the American system (Jones, 2019).

According to MEXT (2020), children attend a public or private preschool or kindergarten (approximately 15,500 schools) at the ages of 3–5. From elementary school to university, the 6-3-3-4-year system is introduced, that is, 6 years of elementary school (approximately 20,000 schools), 3 years of junior high school (approximately 10,000 schools), 3 years of high school (approximately 4,900 schools), and 4 years of university (795 universities). Figure 1 shows the education system in Japan.

Figure 1

The Japanese Education System (Created by the Author Based on MEXT, 2021a)



Formal compulsory education is 9 years in elementary and junior high school, with almost 100% of children attending schools. The rate of enrollment in high school is 98.8%, and the rate of admission to universities and junior colleges is 58.6% (MEXT, 2020).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012), the average university enrollment rate on their list of countries is 62%, and South Korea, as another Asian country, has a rate of 71%; therefore, it cannot be claimed that Japan has a high enrollment rate (MEXT, 2013).

As one of the features of Japanese education, MEXT (2016) stated that in other countries, teachers mainly specialize in classes, whereas in Japan, teachers conduct not only classes but also take charge of various work like daily life guidance and club activity guidance. This fact stipulates that a school plays a major role in personality development of

each child by having the teacher comprehensively grasp and guide the situation of each child.

MEXT claims that the “effectiveness of Japanese-style school education” is highly evaluated internationally.

On the contrary, the problem is that the working hours of Japanese teachers, especially the time spent outside of class, are longer than in other countries (MEXT, 2016). In Japanese elementary schools, one homeroom teacher is responsible for the class. Although each grade has a head teacher, the load of class management falls on one homeroom teacher.

In this way, the fact that teachers are involved not only in the lessons but also in the lives of the students can build a deep relationship of trust because students consult with teachers about learning and other problems. On the contrary, there is a concern that the greater the teachers’ responsibility to the students, the more the students rely on them, and this fact hinders the development of autonomy. In addition, too much work restricts teachers’ time for lesson planning and preparation. Consequently, teachers simply teach the contents of the textbook according to the teacher manual’s instruction. Therefore, this situation makes it difficult to develop teachers’ and students’ autonomy.

Another characteristic of Japanese education is that everyone is expected to be educated on the same levels or more. For instance, the goal is that students take multiple tests until the entire class passes and improve their grades in all subjects evenly. Meanwhile, even if some of the students have not mastered and reached the required level for the next grade,

all students can be promoted from grade to grade (Jones, 2019). According to Jones, “these structural features of the education system in Japan influence learner attitudes, beliefs and motivations as related to learning English” (p. 23). Jones is concerned that there is a polarization between students who study EFL simply for university entrance examinations and students who study it to be used as a communication tool internationally in the future.

However, some young students may not think about their purpose in studying EFL because English classes have started in elementary school as a compulsory subject. In other words, there may be some students who just learn EFL without having a specific objective because it is merely one of the subjects that they must take. They may not consider its need for university entrance or as a communication tool with foreigners during their elementary years. Therefore, teachers should effectively recognize the motivation for autonomous learning for these students.

1.3.1.2 The Transition of English Education in Japan

In 1854, owing to the Treaty of Peace and Amity between Japan and the United States, the Japanese isolation policy that lasted for 200 years was abolished (Yamashita, 2015). Later, a school system modeled after the West was established, and English education as a foreign language began. Around this time, English education at elementary schools was also being conducted. According to Shimizu (2010), from the *Meiji* era to the end of World

War II, *Kaidoku* (question and answer learning community) and *Yakudoku* (read and translate) in learning Dutch became the model of foreign language instruction.

According to Ueno (2017), the Ministry of Education, in 1886, stipulated that one or two subjects from English, agriculture, and handicraft commerce could be chosen in elementary schools, depending on the needs of the local area. However, owing to a shift to an education policy that emphasized Japanese language education, English language education at elementary schools was discontinued. English education was abolished from the Sino-Japanese War to World War II until English education in junior and high schools resumed post World War II.

After World War II, in Japan, with the development of the postwar economy, the number of English learners increased rapidly; however, the number of teachers with sufficient English proficiency was overwhelmingly short. Due to challenges in traveling abroad during this period, very few English teachers had practiced their English for communicative purposes (Suzuki & Wakabayashi, 1999). Therefore, the grammar-translation method was common in classrooms (Sasaki, 2008). Afterward, according to the Course of Studies enacted in 1989 and 1998, Japanese elementary and secondary school students needed to develop their motivation and attitude toward learning and their ability to solve social problems autonomously. The need for autonomous learning was recognized for the first time.

Nevertheless, English has been learned as a requirement to pass entrance examinations as *juken eigo* (Shimizu, 2010).

“In 2008, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture announced that English will be introduced into elementary schools once a week (35 lessons in total in a year) as a regular class in fifth and sixth grade” (Ikegashira et al., 2009), and this program started in 2011.

However, most elementary schools had already started their own English programs. In 2013, for the first time since the *Meiji* Restoration, English education was resumed in all Japanese elementary schools as Foreign Language Activities (*gaikokugo katsudo*) in the fifth and sixth grades but not as a mandatory subject. During this period, there was a boom in English learning in Japan. “Ironically, however, this change had the result of producing many English teachers with poor qualifications” (Sasaki, 2008, p. 66). Consequently, teachers who became English teachers around that time primarily focused on English grammar and translation and not on communication.

After many years of debate, in 2020, MEXT finally implemented foreign language (*gaikokugo*) as a mandatory subject in Japanese elementary schools, with a 2-year transition period from 2018. Therefore, 2020 was a revolutionary year in the history of English education in Japan—most schools choose to teach English despite having a choice to select another foreign language. Moreover, MEXT (2014) presented an “English education reform plan corresponding to globalization,” where they announced that foreign language classes

must be conducted thrice a week utilizing module classes in fifth and sixth grades. In addition, classes of Foreign Language Activities must be conducted once to twice a week in third and fourth grades, acquiring English and fostering communication skills. Elementary school teachers are, therefore, working toward this goal in English education.

Furthermore, to respond to the recent globalization and rapid technological innovation, the Japanese government has announced a revision of the Course of Study (*gakushu shidou youryou*) formulated by MEXT (2017a) for the first time in approximately 10 years. The new Course of Study has been implemented in elementary schools all over Japan since 2020, and foreign language and programming education have been strengthened as well.

In this new guideline, from the perspective of what the students can do through learning, MEXT (2017c) aims to develop a balance of qualities and abilities consisting of three pillars: knowledge and skills; thinking ability, judgment ability, and expressiveness; and power toward learning and humanity. Furthermore, because how to learn is emphasized to nurture these resources, three viewpoints are set as keywords: proactive, interactive, and deep learning (MEXT, 2021b). Proactive learning, in other words autonomous learning, is one of the important foundations that students must foster through English education.

However, many elementary school teachers who became teachers before English education began in Japanese elementary schools did not expect the responsibility to teach

English. In fact, some teachers became elementary school teachers to avoid being involved in English education as they are not confident with English language. According to a survey conducted by Adachi (2021), about two-thirds of the total 147 Japanese elementary school English teachers believe that they are not well versed in the language. They expressed that, compared with homeroom teachers, English lessons are more effective with assistant language teachers or English teachers having a license to teach English. These teachers may be under pressure to teach English to achieve the goals set by MEXT.

1.3.1.3 English Proficiency of Japanese EFL Learners

In conducting this research, it is necessary to grasp the objective English levels of Japanese people in the world. Ikegashira et al. (2009) stated that the poor communication ability of Japanese people in English is the most serious challenge in English education. As one example of objective evidence, the Educational Testing Service (ETS, 2023) reported that Japan is ranked 146th out of 170 countries (73 points out of 120 points) in the TOEFL iBT score in 2022. The speaking score (17 points) was the lowest among the four skills just behind reading and listening (19 points) and writing (18 points). The averages for the four skills of the participating countries were as follows: reading with 22.8 points, listening with 23.0 points, speaking with 20.9 points, and writing with 21.7 points. Therefore, there is a

considerable gap between the goal of MEXT of developing world-class English skills, especially communication skills, and the reality facing Japanese English education.

As for other Asian countries, Singapore ranked first in Asia, which is expected because their official language is English. India, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Malaysia follow. Understandably, these countries use English daily in some regions; therefore, they ranked higher than Japan, which does not generally use English daily. In the neighboring countries, China, Taiwan, and South Korea got 90, 87, and 86 points, respectively. Despite their relatively low use of English daily, these countries got better results than Japan.

In European countries, Austria ranked first (101 points); Germany, Slovenia, and Switzerland tied for second place (100 points); and then the Netherlands follows (99 points). As mentioned, English was used more often in these countries than in Japan, and it is common knowledge that English is not the first language in Japan. In addition, children in these countries have more opportunities to see and hear English through the media since they are young; hence, they are familiar with interacting in English in their lives. Moreover, their high English proficiency can be attributed to the fact that English classes at school are conducted in a student-centered approach.

According to Sakai and Takagi (2009), most English teachers in Japan are more likely to take responsibility for students' learning. Such a passivity-inducing approach is not in the best interest of learners because language learning is a lifelong endeavor; therefore,

developing autonomy at the earliest stages is important. Ueda (2021) stated that “autonomous learning has gradually become an important factor in the Japanese educational field as a means of fostering students’ self-esteem, encouraging their interest in studying, and motivating them” (p. 54). This is to achieve the goals set by MEXT (2008) to produce human resources who can work globally.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in 2020, many foreigners visited Japan owing to the effect of inbound business. Therefore, Japanese people in various occupations, who had previously thought that English was not necessary, began to recognize the need to communicate in English. Tatsuki and Zenuk-Nishide (2021) addressed that “English as a lingua franca can be seen as a means of vital communication at a global level for all regardless of language background” (p. 2). In the post-COVID-19 era, there has been an increase in inbound business, leading to a need for Japanese people to improve their English skills.

1.3.2 Overview of the Dutch Education

“The Netherlands is a relatively small Western European country with 17 million people living on a territory” (WENR², 2018), which is the same size as the Kyushu area in Japan. However, the Netherlands, as an EFL-speaking country, shows high English

² Here is the website of the World Education News and Reviews (WENR): <https://wenr.wes.org/>

proficiency and a strong performance in the OECD Program for International Student Assessment study. This subsection provides an overview of the structure of the education system, the historical background of English education in the Netherlands, and the current English proficiency of Dutch EFL learners to explain how these facts are associated with the perceptions of learner autonomy of Dutch teachers later.

1.3.2.1 Education System in the Netherlands

According to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Netherlands ranked first in a survey on child well-being in 2020 (UNICEF, 2020), after ranking first in 2013 (UNICEF, 2013). On the contrary, Japan ranked 6th out of 31 countries in 2013 (UNICEF, 2013) and 20th out of 38 countries in 2020 (UNICEF, 2020). In terms of quality of education, children in the Netherlands showed high satisfaction in this survey because they are educated to demonstrate their abilities.

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW³, 2021a) presents the following four objectives for children’s education:

- to ensure that everyone gets a good education
- to ensure that everyone is prepared for personal independence and responsibility
- to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience and enjoy culture

³ “OCW” is the Dutch abbreviation for *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap* (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science).

- to ensure that teachers, artists, and scientists are able to carry out their work

The second goal indicates that the Dutch government is aiming for an education that fosters autonomy. This is because independence and responsibility are frequently quoted as keywords of learner autonomy or autonomous learning, and these two words are sometimes linked together. For instance, Dickinson (1994) associated independence with positive responsibility.

However, regarding responsibility, Little (2004a) stated that the concept of learner autonomy was prompted by the term responsibility at the end of the 1970s. Furthermore, Little (1991) argued that “responsibility for the learning process lies with the learner” (p. 8). Benson (2011) mentioned that “autonomy is often defined as the capacity to take charge of or responsibility” (p. 58). In recent studies, Admiraal et al. (2019) states that independence is one of the aspects of learner autonomy. In this way, the factors that the Dutch OCW has set in its educational goals are closely related to learner autonomy.

The transition of education in the Netherlands dates back to the 1801 Elementary Education Act (The Dutch Constitution, 2008). According to the Wageningen Environmental Research (WENR, 2018), it was the first formal educational law that stipulated the responsibility of the government to provide free elementary education to all children who could not afford private schools. What makes Dutch education unique compared to other European countries is that the state did not monopolize the school education. WENR (2018)

stated, “Parochial schools (mostly Roman Catholic and Protestant, but also Jewish, Hindu and Muslim) are ubiquitous and even dominant today.”

Schools that are established by religious organizations receive the same level of government funding as public institutions; in fact, it is relatively free for anyone to establish schools in the Netherlands. WENR (2018) explains as follows:

The constitution of the Netherlands guarantees what is almost unthinkable in most European countries: Nearly universal “freedom of education,” which means that anyone can open and run private schools, as long as the schools comply with certain benchmark requirements related to the minimum number of pupils, safety regulations, compulsory hours of classroom instruction, and other criteria. Schools are free to design their own curricula and learning methods and are allowed to “require its teaching staff and pupils to subscribe to the beliefs of their denomination or ideology.”

Therefore, the Dutch government respects the unique educational policies of each school. The World Bank (2012) stated that Dutch education is highly decentralized. While education policy is established by the Dutch OCW, school boards are responsible for delivering it. This government policy has been successful in the Netherlands, which showed “Dutch performance on international tests such as PISA is strong, with a high degree of equality – there are few students who perform poorly. Equality is a major strength of the system”

(Hayes, 2014, p. 16). The OECD (2016) reported that “the Dutch school system is one of the best in the OECD” (OECD, p. 11). Regarding the compulsory education, the Dutch OCW (2021b) mentioned the following:

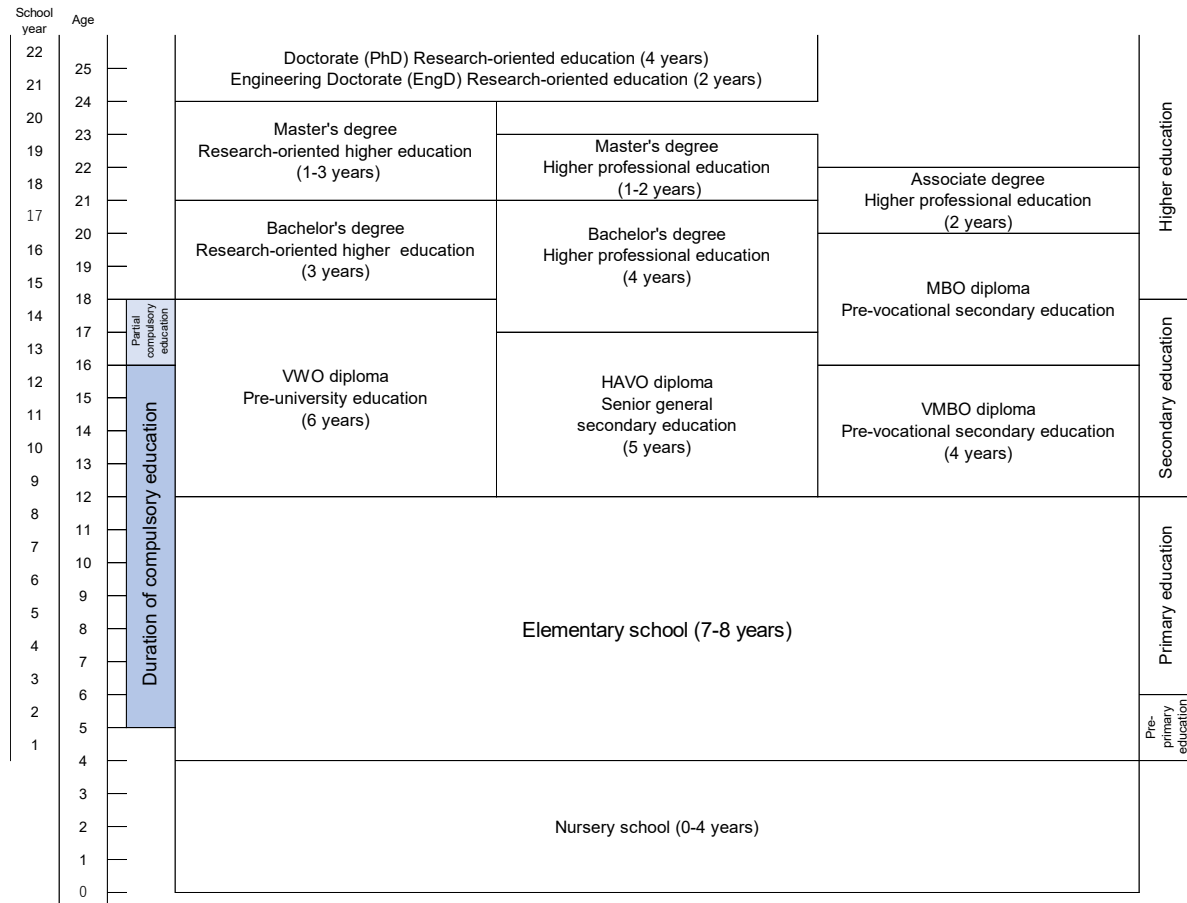
Children aged 5 to 16 are obliged to attend full-time education. They must go to school to gain the necessary skills for work and life. Young people who have not completed secondary level of education at the age of 16 must stay in education until they are 18.

Nuffic⁴ (2021) explained that after secondary school, children enroll in vocational or higher education. Figure 2 describes the educational structure of Dutch schools. Most Dutch children enroll in an elementary school at 4 years old even though compulsory education starts from 5 years old. The first 2 years (grades one and two) are kindergarten, and then grades three to eight are categorized as elementary.

⁴ Nuffic is the Dutch organization for internationalization in education. Here is the website: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en>

Figure 2

The Dutch Education System (Created by the Author Based on Nuffic, 2021)



After graduating from an elementary school, when the children are at the age of 11 or 12, they have options to choose their next educational step linked to their career. Michel et al. (2021) stated that Dutch children decide their course “based on the average achievements on national examinations together with school grades, in [the] advice of their teacher and in consultation with caretakers, the school gives a binding recommendation on the type of secondary education for each child” (p. 161).

There are three options for secondary school: (1) VMBO (prevocational), which prepares adolescents for 4 years to enter vocational training (Dutch MBO); (2) HAVO

(professional), which prepares youth for 5 years to enroll in higher education at universities of applied sciences (Dutch HBO); and (3) VWO (preacademic), which prepares adolescents for 6 years to study at an academic university (Michel et al., 2021). This educational setting offers more options than children in Japan, where most children go to high school for three years after graduating from junior high school.

Thus, there is “great freedom of education and a high degree of autonomy for parents, teachers, and school boards” to choose children’s future” (Hooge, 2017, p. 31). Michel et al. (2021) stated that “the Dutch system for compulsory education is designed to give students the possibility to focus on those subjects they feel attracted to and are talented for, allowing them to choose a suitable profile for their final exams” (p. 161). Therefore, in Dutch schools, the key is for students to make their own choices, which emphasizes developing autonomy while increasing their interests and improving their abilities.

In addition, in Dutch elementary schools, it is common for classes to be taught by two part-time teachers, each working a fixed number of days. Moreover, there are often part-time teaching assistants who can help out a few hours a week (Expatica, 2023). In this case, multiple teachers can interact with a student from different aspects, which allows them to assess the student objectively. Furthermore, learning from multiple teachers can be effective in promoting students’ autonomous learning. Even if students do not have a good relationship

with their homeroom teacher, interacting with other teachers may motivate them to learn contributing to the development of autonomy.

1.3.2.2 The Transition of English Education in the Netherlands

According to Wilhelm (2018), since the sixteenth century, various foreign languages have been learned in the Netherlands such as French, English, Italian, and Spanish.

Therefore, “the Netherlands has a long history of multilingualism, particularly with regard to French and German” (Edwards, 2016, p. 16). Until 1940, French was the most popular foreign language to learn. Meanwhile, between 1870 and 1970, three foreign languages, namely, French, German, and English, were required to be taught in Dutch secondary and grammar schools.

However, English has become the first foreign language since the 1970s (Wilhelm, 2018). French and German were less popular and became optional subjects. Presently, English is the only foreign language that is taught in all Dutch elementary schools. Thus, the Dutch people have moved from a traditionally multilingual population to being bilingual with sufficient knowledge of English (Edwards, 2016). In Dutch education nowadays, the language of instruction is Dutch; however, many schools and universities use English (Nuffic, 2021).

In 1986, in the Netherlands, English became a compulsory subject for the last 2 years of elementary school (10–12-year-olds) (Koster, 1986; Michel et al., 2021; Wilhelm, 2018). However, the Dutch OCW “does not provide extensive guidance on how to implement this, nor are there standard coursebooks, methods or tests that schools have to use” (Michel et al., 2021, p. 167). In addition, the Dutch OCW merely advises conducting 80 hours of English lessons during the last 2 years of elementary school. Most elementary schools teach English for 1-hour a week for students to be able to prepare for secondary school English lessons.

In 2006, OCW established 58 educational objectives for the core subjects—Dutch, English, Math, Art, and Physical Education. The objectives were reduced from 115 because OCW stated that “Schools are given the opportunity to make choices that suit their own profile. Because each school is unique, each student is unique, and every student counts” (p. 1, Dutch intermediary translation⁵). OCW claimed that “It is important that schools have the freedom to make their own choices, choices that fit the school and around the school. The new core objectives fit well into it” (p. 1, Dutch intermediary translation).

In this regard, the OCW (2016) emphasized the importance of autonomy of each school and student in Dutch elementary schools. They set only four following objectives for elementary school English education:

⁵ “Dutch intermediary,” who cooperated with data collection for this research in the Netherlands, will be explained in Section 3.2.1.1.2.

1. The pupils learn to acquire information from simple spoken and written English texts.
2. Students learn to ask for information in English or give simple subjects and develop an attitude that they dare to express in that language.
3. The students learn the spelling of some simple words about everyday subjects.
4. Students learn word meaning and writing. Reflecting on English words to look up using the dictionary. (pp. 24-25, Dutch intermediary translation)

According to the Dutch OCW (2014) website, since August 2015, 15% of teachers' instruction in class has been allowed to be in foreign languages such as English, German, or French. It was implemented not only in a foreign language class but also in other classes such as history, biology, or physical education, and using English as a mode of instruction was strengthened. In addition, the Dutch OCW has strengthened bilingual education in elementary schools, and in 2015, a 5-year pilot project was launched in 12 Dutch schools. In these schools, 30%–50% of classroom time was spent in English, German, or French from age 4 (OCW, 2014). Afterward, in 2021, 17 elementary schools have been chosen as pilot schools of bilingual education (Nuffic, 2021).

Goriot (2019) examined Nuffic's (2021) data and revealed that Dutch elementary schools are allowed to teach English up to 4-hours a week. However, in reality, according to Michel et al. (2021), English classes are usually held once a week in the last two grades (10–

11 years old) in many schools. Currently, approximately 18% of elementary schools are conducting English lessons from the first grade (kindergarten) (Goriot, 2019).

Generally, in Japanese elementary schools, students start learning English in third grade. On the contrary, Dutch elementary schools start it earlier. Nevertheless, according to Hayes (2014), the reason for the success of English education in the Netherlands even though they take only 1-hour weekly classes in grades seven and eight (grades five and six in Japan) is the out-of-school English exposure. For instance, “English language television programs are subtitled” (p. 16). This allows them to master English faster and naturally compared to Asian countries like Japan. Meanwhile, after the Netherlands joined the EU in 1958, opportunities for Dutch people to contact and use English increased dramatically. Along with that, the movement of bilingualism has been advancing (Edwards, 2016).

According to Phillipson (2023), European people are exposed massively to Hollywood through avenues such as watching American movies, fiction, and lifestyles. Therefore, European citizens have developed strong skills in English, the lingua franca of globalization. “These US products are transmitted with the original soundtrack in the Nordic and the Netherlands, which strengthens the learning of English, and are generally dubbed elsewhere” (p. 124). In this manner, the Europeans, such as the Dutch, have many opportunities to interact in English in their daily lives, and children are more likely to master English faster than some Asians.

1.3.2.3 English Proficiency of Dutch EFL Learners

An online article, DutchNews.nl (2018), mentioned that English can no longer be considered a foreign language in the Netherlands. This news article quotes Alison Edwards stating: “If you can assume that you can walk down the street and the hairdresser will be able to speak in English, and the bus driver, and the taxi driver, then functionally it is a second language, not a foreign language.” The article continues as follows:

The Dutch speak, it is claimed, the best English in the world. They often prefer speaking in English when foreigners try to practice their Dutch, and the higher education sector here is rapidly being anglicized, with more than half of university courses now taught in English.

In fact, 94% of Dutch people are bilingual or multilingual (Heijmans & Christians, 2017).

Therefore, the Netherlands is one of the most successful countries in EFL education. “English has become commonplace in the Netherlands – [both] encountering it and using it are part of normal everyday life” (Edwards, 2016, p. 23).

Furthermore, many Dutch people are anxious about the enormous impact of English, and they are worried that the day will come when the Dutch language eventually disappears and is replaced by English (Nortier, 2011). It can be said that Dutch people are getting more comfortable speaking English. In fact, according to Little (2007), in economically united

Europe, foreign languages are critical in people's daily work. This situation continues to be true despite Brexit.

As a country that has succeeded in teaching EFL, the average score of test-takers of TOEFL iBT in 2022 in the Netherlands is significantly higher than that of Japan (99 vs. 73 points) (ETS, 2023). This indicates a comparable difference in the English proficiency of Japan and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, according to the UNICEF Children's Well-being Survey in 2020, the Netherlands ranks first overall and Japan ranks 20th out of 38 countries. This can be attributed to the fact that the Dutch children are satisfied with their education and life, which is reflected in the significant difference in English proficiency with Japan. In addition, this is because, as the researcher in this study mentioned earlier, Dutch children are exposed with English-speaking environments in their daily lives. The researcher hypothesized that this was the result of Dutch children being taught to be more autonomous and responsible for their English learning than Japanese children.

1.4 Research Approaches

This study utilized a mixed method that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the perceptions of Japanese and Dutch elementary school teachers about student autonomy. The qualitative results were supported by quantitative analysis. Specifically, the following methods were used:

- questionnaires for Japanese and Dutch teachers with 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions
- semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch elementary school English teachers of grades three to six
- analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals

These data will be compared to answer the five research questions mentioned in the next chapter. The students and textbooks considered in this research are from Grades 3 to 6, when English education officially begins in elementary schools in Japan and students are 10 years old in the Netherlands.

In Japan, students enrolled in the first grade are 6–7 years old, whereas in the Netherlands, students enrolled in the first grade are 4–5 years old. Thus, third graders are 8–9 years old, fourth graders are 9–10 years old, fifth graders are 10–11 years old, and sixth graders are 11–12 years old. Chapter 3 describes each of the research approaches in greater detail.

1.5 Conclusion of Chapter 1

Learner autonomy is one of the critical factors to nurture children's communication skills to survive in the globalized world. However, in the current circumstances in Japan, students lack opportunities to use English in their everyday lives, unlike their Western

counterparts. Therefore, Japanese EFL learners need to have their own successful strategies to improve learner autonomy.

To achieve the goal set by MEXT (i.e., students need to nurture communication skills autonomously), teachers must realize their significant role in fostering learners' autonomy, following the new Course of Study (MEXT, 2017a), which was implemented in 2020.

Kojima (2018) stated that “teachers of EFL need to help students to develop not only communicative competence but also learner autonomy through active learning” (p. 43), which was cited from the report of the Central Council of Education (2015), because teachers believe that authentic communication is key to the acquisition of the target language (Little et al., 2017).

Although English has become a mandatory subject for fifth graders in Japanese elementary schools since 2020, any indication of the necessary autonomy building that will ensure the goals set by the MEXT is missing. Therefore, to ensure that learners receive the best learning opportunity, Japanese elementary school teachers must consider how they can effectively deliver their English lessons to improve students' communication skills with learner autonomy.

However, according to a survey conducted by MEXT (2018a), Japanese teachers' English proficiency is not relatively high. In 2018, only 36.2% of junior high school teachers and 68.2% of high school teachers hold the Grade Pre-1 of the EIKEN Test in Practical

English Proficiency. Regardless, even if Japanese teachers recognize how to assist students as successful autonomous learners, the students are still responsible for their own learning.

Meanwhile, many European countries and the United States have engaged in fostering learner autonomy far longer than Asian countries in second/foreign language learning (Nakata, 2011). In the Netherlands, especially, learner autonomy has been considered a significant factor in their educational setting, not only in English classes but also in all other subjects. Therefore, the Netherlands has become a top English-speaking country (Wittenborg, 2016), and the Dutch government has implemented a fully bilingual English/Dutch education program (Gowling, 2014), with learner autonomy as a central element. This fact enticed the researcher to conduct a comparison of the two countries. Despite their different backgrounds in terms of religion, location, language origin, ethnic distinction, and culture, both Japan and the Netherlands agree on teaching English as a second language at elementary schools, which is a compulsory subject for 10-year-olds (fifth graders). In Japan, foreign language learning, mainly English, is mandatory from the third grade. In the Netherlands, some schools begin English education in the first grade, but most schools more commonly begin teaching English in the third and fourth grades. Therefore, this study focuses on English teachers in third to sixth grades.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To investigate teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands, the researcher examined previous studies related to learner autonomy. This chapter discusses the following aspects: definitions of learner autonomy, research on learner autonomy in the world and Japan, teachers' roles in fostering learner autonomy, the concept of autonomy vs. teacher control, and autonomy-supportive teaching proposed by Reeve (2016). In addition, Admiraal et al.'s (2019) study on learner autonomy in the Netherlands is an important reference in advancing this research. Hence, the five research questions presented were based on previous studies.

2.2 Definitions of Learner Autonomy in the Context of the Present Study

Different researchers have varying definitions of learner autonomy; however, it is necessary to focus on a definition that applies to foreign language learning in elementary schools, which is the subject of this study.

MEXT (2021b) explained that the National Curriculum Standards strengthen “proactive, interactive, and deep learning” (*shutaiteki taiwateki de fukai manabi*) to improve lessons from the perspective of active learning. However, the word *shutaiteki* is translated into various words in Japanese–English dictionaries, for example, independent, self-reliant,

autonomous, self-directed, responsible, active, or proactive.⁶ Meanwhile, educators often interpreted *shutaiteki manabi* as autonomous learning. For instance, Goya (2019) interpreted it as “learners’ autonomous learning” (p. 22). Therefore, in the present study, the researcher proceeds on the premise that “proactive learning” by MEXT equates to autonomous learning.

As mentioned earlier, Holec’s (1981, p. 3) definition of learner autonomy (“the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”) is, according to Palfreyman (2003), the most referenced concept of learner autonomy in language education in Europe. In addition, it has become a widely acknowledged goal for language learning in the 1980s to the 1990s.

Moreover, Palfreyman detailed the arguments of other researchers regarding learner autonomy in language learning. Palfreyman stated:

For example, that autonomy is a human right (e.g., Benson, 2000); that autonomous learning is more effective than other approaches to learning (e.g., Naiman et al., 1978); and that learners need to take charge of their own learning in order to make the most of available resources, especially outside the classroom (e.g., Waite, 1994). (p.

1)

These definitions are too broad to be utilized in second language acquisition. In fact, they might be utilized in learning in and outside of the classroom, although Waite (1994) mentioned that they complement learning outside the classroom. Fukuda (2007) noted that

⁶ Here is the source of the Japanese-English dictionary for the English translation of "shutaiteki": <https://ejje.weblio.jp/>

Holec claimed learner autonomy as an ability, while Dickinson (1987) defined learner autonomy as a situation in which learners are responsible for all of the decisions regarding their learning and the implementation of those decisions. According to Fukuda (2007), Dickinson named the situation in which learners learn efficiently without the need for schools or teachers and without relying on prepared materials as full autonomy.

In recent years, further research has been conducted to determine if learner autonomy is a necessary factor for EFL students to develop their second language acquisition abilities when they communicate in English inside and outside the classroom. In addition, this research focuses on learning EFL inside the classroom.

Commonly, learner autonomy and self-direction are used erroneously and interchangeably in the literature (Lai, 2018). Lai proposed that learner autonomy is frequently encountered within applied linguistics, whereas self-direction is regarded as a significant and influential concept in the realm of educational literature. With regards to self-direction, Holec (1996) explained that learners can organize and make necessary decisions on their learning program.

As for the necessary decisions, Holec (1980) noted the following five components:

- learning goals
- learning content and progression (the syllabus)
- learning methods and techniques

- monitoring of learning progress
- evaluation of learning achievement (p. 20)

Lennon (2012) stated that learning is completely self-directed, and learners are completely autonomous when they completely embody these five factors. Therefore, being responsible for their own learning is what self-directed and autonomous learners have in common.

However, this does not mean that learners do not need teachers. Lennon (2012) insisted that autonomous learners work with the teacher and their colearners, taking responsibility of their own learning progress. Therefore, taking responsibility for one's own learning is a significant concept.

In addition, responsible learners are not model students who just follow the teacher's instruction. According to Scharle and Szabó (2000), although they do not prioritize teamwork over individual learning, "responsible learners are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefit" (p. 3). Thus, autonomous learners have a constructive and positive effect on the lesson and on their teachers and classmates. Moreover, autonomous learners do not blame teachers and others if they fail to achieve their goals.

At the same time, there is a possibility that an interdependent activity operates well in a certain context. For instance, learners can foster the ability when working with peers for mutual purposes and be responsible for their learning (Ivanovska, 2015). Little et al. (2017) presented three roles of interdependent students in an autonomous classroom stating that

autonomous learners are:

1. Communicators, continuously using and gradually developing their communicative skills in the TL.
2. Experimenters with language, gradually developing an explicit analytical knowledge of the TL system and an awareness of the cultural conventions and social constraints that shape its use.
3. Intentional learners, gradually developing an explicit awareness of affective and metacognitive aspects of language learning. (Little et al., 2017, p. 2)

Little et al. (2017) suggested that students must be offered learning activities according to their developed proficiency level. Even beginners can follow the above three roles when they were provided with the appropriate activities for their level. Lennon (2012) claimed that “learner autonomy is available to all learners and all teachers of languages” (p. 9), which is of course only true if teachers and learners are aware of its importance and plan lessons accordingly in the first place. In addition, it can apply to even young learners such as elementary students.

2.3 Research on Learner Autonomy

This section discusses previous research and developments regarding learner autonomy worldwide and in Japan.

2.3.1 Research on Learner Autonomy Worldwide

According to Lennon (2012), the notion of learner autonomy in language learning was recognized in the 1970s, and Henri Holec was a pioneer who clarified the definition of learner autonomy. Lennon explained Holec's achievement as follows: Holec was director of the self-access center called the *Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues* (CRAPEL)⁷ at the University of Nancy in France. However, this center did not function effectively owing to the lack of autonomy in the participants' self-directed learning. That is to say, they were accustomed to learning with all the decisions and materials already prepared by the teacher, textbook writer, syllabus designer, and curriculum planner. Therefore, learners must be trained to independently plan their learning, self-evaluate, and attain learning techniques.

Holec (1980) realized that teacher support was more significant than specific teaching methodology, and teacher-controlled and teacher-centered methods were not appropriate to foster learner motivation. Owing to the increasing demand for language learning worldwide, nurturing learner autonomy is more popular than learning under pressure in a crowded classroom (Broady & Kenning, 1996).

Little (2003) was convinced that self-access learning is not efficient in a taught class; however, advising learners on how to learn outside the classroom is also needed. Little cited

⁷ CRAPEL was established in 1962, for foreign language learners (adults from universities and the community facilities).

Karlsson et al. (1997) and stated that the most successful self-access projects are those by the University of Helsinki with their effective and flexible means of supporting learners. Little claimed that the teachers' role is to create and maintain a learning environment that fosters autonomous learning.

Furthermore, Lennon (2012) emphasized that "the teacher's role is that of facilitator, supporter, and guide" (p. 9) in the classroom. Benson (2011) added "helper, coordinator, counselor, consultant, adviser, knower, and resource" (p. 185) to these. For instance, Dam (1995) researched on teen English learners who gradually developed learning autonomy in a Danish middle school. The students were provided with a classic illustration and the teacher used the target language right from the start. She then gradually increased a repertoire of useful learning activities congruent with the development of learners' abilities. In the process of learning, she used a combination of teacher, peer, and self-assessment. Little (2003) analyzed Dam's study findings that posters and learner logbooks mainly played important roles in helping learners capture much of the content of learning, supported the development of speaking, and provided a means for assessment. These processes provided rich evidence of how and why Dam's (1995) approach was more successful than traditional teacher-centered approaches. Therefore, autonomous learning can be developed for younger and adult learners when they do their part of monitoring their progress and evaluating their achievement with teacher and peer support.

Yagcioglu (2015) claimed that “learner autonomy, learner responsibility, and motivation are always related to each other as no one can learn new things if they are not enough motivated” (p. 429). In addition, Little (2006) described how learner autonomy solves the lack of learner motivation: “Autonomous learners draw on their intrinsic motivation when they accept responsibility for their own learning and commit themselves to develop the skills of reflective self-management in learning; and success in learning strengthens their intrinsic motivation” (p. 2). Therefore, learner autonomy and motivation are correlated, and one of the important roles of teachers is to motivate students to become autonomous learners with successful future self-images as language learners.

Lamb (2011) researched the relationship between future self-images, motivation, and autonomy in language learning. He selected 12 English learners in Indonesia aged 11–14 years when he started this research and interviewed them from 2002 to 2008 to compare the changes in their views toward learning English. From this small-scale research, he revealed that learners who were initially highly motivated autonomously learned and had confident visions of a future regarding using English. On the contrary, learners who initially showed low level of motivation to learn the language had not showed autonomous learning and had much less clear visions of a future English-using self.

Thus, Lamb (2011) concluded that motivation, autonomy, and identity are all significant factors in second language learning and teaching. Dörnyei (2009) mentioned that

the future self-guides are effective when the coach and the trainee (herein, the teacher and the learner) have the complete vision. Thus, the teacher needs to manage their English class to encourage students to become autonomous learners. According to Kaymakamoğlu (2018), teachers' decisions and actions influence learners' achievement. Hence, if the teachers' expectations for their students are low, teachers prepare poorly for the lessons and use low-quality instructional materials, which results in low-quality teaching. In contrast, when teachers utilized a learner-centered approach, learners exhibit active learning attitudes. Therefore, teachers need to prepare lessons that foster student-centered learning.

Yagcioglu (2015) expressed that teachers must be aware of essential classroom applications. She insisted that good lesson plans, modern teaching techniques, and approaches are needed to become autonomous learners. Besides, Yagcioglu believed that when students feel “happy and active in their class hours, they can be autonomous learners” (p. 429). Moreover, she suggested that responsibility and autonomy should be promoted for the following reasons: “to have better class hours, to create joyful class hours, to have more successful and happy students, to have more students who have self-confidence and respect, and to create creativity and giftedness” (p. 430).

Yagcioglu (2015) researched on university students' motivation and autonomy in an EFL classroom in Turkey by implementing some different classroom activities and methods, such as using quotes, pictures, and photos from the internet, music and some songs, and word

charts. She found that all the students in the classes were very active and lively. The students were enthusiastic in learning English as a second language and were pleased with the idea of conducting different classroom activities. Therefore, they were effectively motivated.

Yagcioglu (2015) stated that the students preferred using the internet and Google in their lessons. These tools are effective not only for university students but also for elementary students because the age of users of the internet is nowadays getting lower worldwide. Yagcioglu concluded that “motivation and learner autonomy are the essential issues in human’s life” and “students can be more active and talkative if they can be motivated with the new and modern approaches effectively” (p. 434). Therefore, teachers need to seek novel classroom activities that encourage the students to be more active, motivated, and autonomous language learners.

Furthermore, Admiraal et al. (2019) investigated Dutch teachers’ and students’ perceptions of learner autonomy, through a focus group meeting with ten teachers. Consequently, they found six aspects of learner autonomy: freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence. Afterward, they created the questionnaires for teachers and students based on these six aspects. The researcher of the present study used the question items of Admiraal et al. for the current research.

2.3.2 Research on Learner Autonomy in Japan

Ivanovska (2015) stated that some researchers believed that learner autonomy was originally rooted in European countries, such as the contribution of Holec (1980), as discussed in the previous section. However, other researchers (Pierson, 1996) claimed that the very notion of autonomy is deeply and historically rooted in Eastern philosophies.

In Japan, according to H. Kojima and Y. Kojima (2005), the significance of promoting learner autonomy in Japanese education is one of the themes of concern in recent years. In 1998, the Curriculum Council (*Kyoiku Katei Shingikai*), which is an advisor to MEXT, emphasized the concept of autonomy and encouraged students and individual schools to develop their autonomy and implement autonomous learning to cope with the various social changes (H. Kojima & Y. Kojima, 2005). The Curriculum Council described the purposes of national curriculum standard reform as follows:

- to help children cultivate rich humanity and sociality as a Japanese living in the international community
- to help children develop [the] ability to learn and think independently
- to help children acquire basic abilities and skills and grow their own individuality with plenty of scope for educational activities

- to encourage individual schools to show ingenuity in developing unique educational activities to make the school distinctive (1998, Kyoiku Katei Shingikai)

Although the Curriculum Council advocated the importance of autonomous learning a quarter century ago, evidently, individual schools were not implementing it in their classes in any tangible way. H. Kojima and Y. Kojima (2005) stated that in EFL education, it is necessary to nurture learners' autonomy and foster students' practical communication competence for them to understand the information provided and intentions presented by others and effectively express their own opinions. Furthermore, they described new goals in English education before it began in Japanese elementary schools, as follows:

...the key words in the new study guidelines announced in 1998 and 1999, and introduced in lower and upper secondary schools in academic years 2002 and 2003 respectively are: Deepen understanding of language and cultures through learning a foreign language; foster positive attitudes toward communication with foreign people; develop practical abilities for cross-cultural communication; and integrate different language skills. (p. 60)

In addition, Nakata (2011) insisted that learner autonomy has been much valued as an important factor by MEXT. According to Esaki (2002), in the education field, Japan is facing a transitional period from a traditional culture of being taught, such as imitation, listening,

reading, and remembering, to a modern culture of self-teaching such as questioning, considering, searching, and doing.

When EFL learners have specific purposes of learning the language, achieving their goal is easy. Cotterall (2018), who was an associate professor at Akita International University in Japan from 2005 to 2008, participated in language advising sessions with Japanese English learners at the Center for Independent Language Learning in Akita. Learners aged 15–77 registered at this center and Cotterall’s advising sessions were popular among them. Each learner had various intents of learning English such as university applications, English reading proficiency, and foreign travels. Cotterall provided them with appropriate advice for their desired learning, and then they considered themselves a part of a language-learning community.

From this experience, Cotterall (2018) revealed that “the learners’ strong commitment to their goals is due to the fact that they are operating within an environment in which they have assumed responsibility for their learning” (p. 60). This fact matched with Holec’s (1981) definition of learner autonomy, “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3).

Apart from learning a language in a classroom, self-access learning centers are becoming popular in Japan. For instance, Cooker (2018) explained the workflow of the self-access learning center (SALC) at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS). According to her, generally, many resources for language learners such as graded readers,

videos, and computers are all useless if there is no system to maintain them. The SALC at KUIS, however, has been operating well since it opened in 2001. Cooker claimed that all materials being entertaining is the key to success. “For example, music and movie-based activities, and the interactions between Learning Advisors and fellow students allow learners to see that effective language learning should be related to everyday pastimes, rather than something which is confined to classrooms and grammar textbooks” (p. 142).

The SALC was created differently from a typical classroom or library because the atmosphere of the facility made students feel like they were in a “little piece of America,” from the room color, furniture, and displays (Cooker, 2018). These visual effects can be utilized in elementary school classrooms to make learning more exciting and foster a fun autonomous learning.

Meanwhile, regarding autonomous motivation of EFL learners in Japanese elementary schools, Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) surveyed 515 Japanese elementary students over one academic year. Their results indicated that children’s prior autonomous motivation influenced their sense of need satisfaction. This finding indicated that more autonomous and motivated children were more likely to feel that their needs were being met in a class, as Fukuda et al. (2011) stated: “At the heart of learner autonomy lays the concept of learner motivation” (p. 71).

Moreover, the study discussed that teachers need to understand “students’ self-reported motivation, and engagement in order to assess their ability, interest, and behavior” (Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017, p. 148). This means that when elementary students are motivated to learn EFL, they meet their own autonomy need satisfaction, which is perceived by students’ engagement and achievement (Jang et al., 2012). This study found that teachers’ support to self-motivated students further motivates them; however, there is no direct relationship between motivation and engagement. Nevertheless, if the teacher supports such self-motivated students, student motivation and engagement increase, indicating that teachers’ support is critical.

To promote student engagement in English lessons, teachers need to provide appropriate support and structure to their English classes so that students can not only enjoy while learning but also develop autonomy with increased motivation along with the support of teachers (Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017). However, teachers must create “a clear, interesting, and well-paced learning environment” (p. 149) for the students. Moreover, because elementary students do not intend to learn English to pass the exams or obtain good marks on tests, teachers must facilitate English classes that promote student engagement and enjoyment in the classes for them to become autonomous EFL learners.

2.4 Teacher's Roles to Foster Learner Autonomy

Previous studies (Cotterall, 2018; Fukuda et al., 2011; H. Kojima & Y. Kojima, 2005; Lamb, 2011; Lennon, 2012; Little et al., 2017; Nakata, 2011; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017; Yagcioglu, 2015) have shown that learner autonomy is critical for students to acquire EFL. According to Admiraal et al. (2019), a sense of autonomy has a positive influence on student learning. However, some Japanese English teachers expressed that students' autonomy does not need to be fostered because "the teacher governs interaction" (Hughes et al., 2011, p. 285) in Japanese foreign language classrooms. In addition, "even in tasks that focus on meaning and fluency, the teacher as head-of-the-classroom has a direct influence upon the pattern of interaction" (Hughes et al., 2011, p. 285). According to Usuki (2001), this can be attributed to the fact that Japanese students are usually taught to be passive learners. In other words, Japanese students have a low awareness of learner autonomy because they are expected to follow their teachers.

Although teachers must provide a clear environment to students as Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) suggested, it is questionable whether teachers should provide definite instructions to students in which there is no space for students to think about. That is to say, excessive instruction from teachers hinders the development of students' autonomy. For instance, it is common in Japanese elementary English classes that teachers decide on students doing pair work as to which student speaks first during the conversation practice. This is what the

researcher in this study often experiences when teaching English in an English class with a homeroom teacher in an elementary school as a JTE. Japanese students are often not empowered to decide the activity process by themselves. Banks (2016) stated that Atkinson (1997) has insisted that in Western schools, students commonly express their opinions, while in Asian schools, students listen, observe, and learn.

Regarding teacher–learner roles, traditional classrooms emphasize the teacher–student relationship. Students more likely accept instructions from teachers in an unquestionable and unchallenging way. Even so, if students are not willing to learn autonomously, it will be difficult for teachers to motivate students to utilize what they have learned in the classroom in actual communication. Sakai and Takagi (2009) discussed the research results of Sakai et al. (2008) who found that, regardless of students having an aptitude for autonomy, if the teacher manages the class powerfully, the students naturally assume that the teacher controls the class. For instance, it could be the choice of the textbook, methods of learning, pace of class, amount of homework, or assessment. Therefore, Sakai and Takagi (2009) argued that teachers should involve students in class management to not hinder student autonomy.

To address the passive way of learning in Japanese classrooms, MEXT (2017c) directed that teachers foster a proactive attitude to students to try communicating using a foreign language as one of the objectives. MEXT explained that it cultivates not only an active attitude of trying to communicate using a foreign language in class but also an attitude

of continuing to learn, even outside of school education. Therefore, Japanese teachers should plan and conduct lessons that foster learners' autonomy under the new Course of Study.

Robson and Hardy (2018) insisted that it is important for teachers "to educate students about the benefits of becoming autonomous" (p. 19). To do this, however, teachers initially need to understand and accept the benefits of autonomous learning.

Daisy Mertens, Dutch *Teacher of the Year 2016*, stated in Hooge's (2017) chapter, "Every morning when I go to school, I have only one aim: To be the best teacher ever for my class." To her comment, Hooge adds: "Self-confidence, autonomy, connection, reflection and learning together by taking responsibility. If it were up to Teacher of the Year Daisy Mertens, this would be the focus in [the] Dutch education system for all teachers" (p. 44). Therefore, Hooge argued that Daisy Mertens' teaching beliefs might be common among Dutch teachers.

Little (2003) discussed the two reasons why learner autonomy is important for second language or EFL learning. First, if learners are reflectively engaged with their learning, it is more efficient and effective because what they learn is more personal and focused. Second, if learners are proactively committed to their learning, their motivation is more likely sustained. In addition, Little claimed that autonomous learners can develop a reflective and proactive attitude to cope with temporary demotivation, in times when they are not having a positive attitude toward all aspects of their learning. Thus, teachers need to cultivate students' attitudes.

Furthermore, according to Little (2003), effective spontaneous communication skills are developed only using the target language. That is to say, if learners use the target language with a high degree of social autonomy in their learning environment, it would be faster for them to acquire it. In contrast, if learners do not use the target language consciously, it will be challenging for them to acquire it. Hence, teachers must provide opportunities for students to utilize the target language in the classroom as much as possible.

One of the three objectives that MEXT (2017a) has set in the new Course of Study is as follows: “To deepen the understanding of the culture behind its foreign language, respecting others and nurturing the attitude to attempt to communicate in a foreign language autonomously” (p. 155, author translation). Regarding this objective, MEXT insisted that learner autonomy should be fostered through communication with others.

However, Richards (2006) argues that “real conversation” occurs in the institutionalized environment of the language classroom, particularly in the context of teacher–student interaction in whole-class teaching, where teacher-controlled patterns of initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) invariably dominate. Moreover, it might especially be challenging to encourage young students to learn autonomously by setting their own goals because, in Japanese elementary schools and even in kindergartens, students customarily obey teachers to be regarded as exemplary children. Some teachers may find it easier to teach

when students are obediently following their instructions. However, this will never foster learner autonomy.

Ellis (2018) mentioned that “although learning to learn is one of the most important aspects of a child’s overall educational development, it is often thought that children are too young to understand information about classroom procedures and to reflect on themselves as learners” (p. 102). Ellis, however, believes that the teacher can help students express themselves in a purposeful and meaningful way regarding their learning experiences when given the opportunity and asked the right questions.

In addition, according to Ellis (2018), the teacher has four main roles to encourage learning in students: affective, procedural, behavioral, and interactive. To implement more effective language learning for students, Ellis claimed that they need to be supported and trained to become effective and successful learners. To achieve this, it will be effective to implement the plan–do–review model advocated by Brewster et al. (2002), which incorporates opportunities for experimentation and further reflection. Moreover, metacognitive and cognitive strategy training can be developed through the following systematic and explicit ways:

1. Students are informed about the aims of a lesson/activity cycle and are asked to think about what they already know and what they need to do to plan and prepare for an activity.

2. Students experiment with the language, that is, they do the activity or task.
3. Students engage in further reflection to review and assess what has been done and how they have done it. (p. 104)

When this cycle is implemented in a classroom, it is possible for even young learners to engage in a language class willingly. Furthermore, effective implementation of learner autonomy results in students who can proactively communicate in English, which is the goal of MEXT.

2.5 Autonomy Vs. Teacher Control

If Japanese EFL teachers do not have concrete methods to follow that will ensure development of learner autonomy, they may hinder students' opportunity to learn autonomously with their inner motivation. Reeve (2006) explained the two types of students in a classroom: (1) students who are curious, proactive, and highly engaged and (2) students who are alienated, reactive, and passive. The researcher of the present study can support this claim as per her own teaching experience.

According to Reeve (2006), the degree of students' engagement during instruction depends on the teacher's supportive quality of the classroom conditions. One of the crucial elements of the supportive quality of the classroom is the teacher's motivating style.

Therefore, teachers must not just follow the lesson plan but must always seek for ways that promote engagement and motivation among students.

Moreover, Reeve (2006) explained teachers' autonomy-supportive style. He expressed that self-determination theory (SDT) can be guided by research on classroom conditions that nurture or undermine students' positive learning as follows: "SDT assumes that all students, irrespective of their backgrounds, possess inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs that provide a motivational foundation for their optimal functioning, academic engagement, constructive social development, and personal well-being" (p. 226). This explanation is based on statements by Deci and Ryan (1985, 1991) and Ryan and Deci (2000, 2002).

Even though SDT has been developed in Western countries, several pieces of empirical research on autonomy support in this paradigm have provided enough evidence of effectiveness which is culturally valid in Asian contexts, such as Korea (Jang et al., 2009), Japan (Yamauchi & Tanaka, 1998), and Taiwan (Hardre et al., 2006). Therefore, Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2015) are convinced that self-determination factors link to well-being and motivation through different cultures and standards.

The concept of SDT is that students' internal motivations and the classroom surrounding influences are dynamically interactive (Reeve et al., 2004). The dialectic framework within SDT, as described by Reeve, presents the two factors of students' inner

motivational resources: (1) psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness and (2) certain interests, preferences, and values (Reeve, 2006).

Moreover, there are four factors that influence learning in the classroom: (1) the teacher's motivating style such as autonomy-supportive and controlling; (2) external events such as rewards, punishers, praise, feedback, evaluation, surveillance, and competition; (3) affordances such as interesting activities, optimal challenges, and opportunities for action; and (4) social demands such as prescriptions, proscriptions, goals, priorities, values, rules, norms, and expectations (Reeve, 2006).

Reeve (2006) stated that "classroom conditions sometimes nurture and enrich the student's inner resources and positive functioning, but other times disrupt and thwart these inner resources, leading to less optimal development" (p. 227). Therefore, teacher's autonomy support and control are deciding factors to either develop students' inner motivational resources or hinder them. Regarding autonomy support and control, Reeve (2009) summarized the definitions, enabling conditions, and instructional behaviors (see Table 1).

Table 1

Elements of Teacher Controlling and Autonomy Support (Reeve, 2009, p. 160)

Controlling	Autonomy Support
<p>Definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal sentiment and behavior teachers provide during instruction to pressure students to think, feel, or behave in a specific way. <p>Enabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt the teacher's perspective.• Intrude into students' thoughts, feelings, or actions.• Pressure students to think, feel, or behave in a specific way. <p>Instructional behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rely on outer sources of motivation.• Neglect explanatory rationales.• Rely on pressure-inducing language.• Display impatience for students to produce the right answer.• Assert power to overcome students' complaints and expressions of negative affect.	<p>Definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal sentiment and behavior teachers provide during instruction to identify, nurture, and develop students' inner motivational resources. <p>Enabling conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt the students' perspective.• Welcome students' thoughts, feelings, and actions.• Support students' motivational development and capacity for autonomous self-regulation. <p>Instructional behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nurture inner motivational resources.• Provide explanatory rationales.• Rely on noncontrolling and informational language.• Display patience to allow time for self-paced learning.• Acknowledge and accept expressions of negative affect.

Furthermore, these two groups have been categorized as 21 specific instructional behaviors that differentiated teachers with an autonomy-supportive style from teachers with a controlling style (Deci et al., 1982; Flink et al., 1990; Reeve et al., 1999), as shown in Table 2 advocated by Reeve and Jang (2006).

Table 2*Operational Definitions for the Teachers' 21 Instructional Behaviors (Reeve & Jang, 2006)*

Instructional behavior	Operational definition
11 Hypothesized autonomy-supportive instructional behaviors	
1. Time listening	Cumulative number of seconds the teacher carefully and fully attended to the student's speech, as evidenced by verbal or nonverbal signals of active, contingent, and responsive information processing.
2. Asking what the student wants	Frequency of questions asking specifically about what the student wanted or desired, such as "Which pattern do you want to start with?"
3. Time allowing a student to work in their own way	Cumulative number of seconds the teacher invited or allowed the student to work independently and to solve the puzzle in his or her own way.
4. Time student talking	Cumulative number of seconds the student talked.
5. Seating arrangements	Whether or not the teacher invited the student to sit in the chair nearest to learning materials.
6. Providing rationales	Frequency of explanatory statements as to why a particular course of action might be useful, such as "How about we try the cube, because it is the easiest one."
7. Praise as informational feedback	Frequency of statements to communicate positive effectance feedback about the student's improvement or mastery, such as "Good job" and "That's great."
8. Offering encouragements	Frequency of statements to boost or sustain the student's engagement, such as "Almost," "You're close," and "You can do it."
9. Offering hints	Frequency of suggestions about how to make progress when the student seemed to be stuck, such as "Holding the puzzle in your hands seems to work better than laying it on the table," and "It might be easier to work on the base first."
10. Being responsive to student-generated questions	Frequency of contingent replies to a student-generated comment or question, such as "Yes, you have a good point" and "Yes, right, that was the second one."
11. Communicating perspective-taking statements	Frequency of empathic statements to acknowledge the student's perspective or experience, such as "Yes, this one is difficult" and "I know it is a sort of difficult one."
10 Hypothesized controlling instructional behaviors	
12. Time teacher talking	Cumulative number of seconds the teacher talked.
13. Time holding/monopolizing learning materials	Cumulative number of seconds the teacher physically held or possessed the puzzle.
14. Exhibiting solutions/answers	Number of puzzle solutions the teacher physically displayed or exhibited before the student had the opportunity to discover the solution for himself or herself.
15. Uttering solutions/answers	Frequency of statements revealing a puzzle solution before the student had the opportunity to discover it for himself or herself, such as "The cube's done this way-like this."
16. Uttering directives/commands	Frequency of commands such as do, move, put, turn, or place, such as "Do it like this," "Flip it over," or "Put it on its side."
17. Making should/ought to statements	Frequency of statements that the student should, must, has to, got to, or ought to do something, such as "You should keep doing that" and "You ought to..."
18. Asking controlling questions	Frequency of directives posed as a question and voiced with the intonation of a question, such as "Can you move it like I showed you?" and "Why don't you go ahead and show me?"
19. Deadline statements	Frequency of statements communicating a shortage of time, such as "A couple of minutes left" and "We only have a few minutes left."
20. Praise as a contingent reward	Frequency of verbal approvals of the student or the student's compliance with the teacher's direction, such as "You're smart" or "You are really good at playing with blocks."
21. Criticizing the student	Frequency of verbal disapprovals of the student or the student's lack of compliance with the teacher's directions, such as "No, no, no, you shouldn't do that."

Reeve and Jang (2006) explained that some autonomy-supportive instructional behaviors are effective for teachers to identify the inner motivational resources of students such as listening to students' concerns and asking what they want. In contrast, controlling instructional behaviors impede students' responses by implementing the teacher's agenda, emphasizing the time the teacher talks and presents materials. Of course, although other elements are considered as autonomy-supportive and controlling instructional behaviors, these 21 factors cover the main categories of classroom events (see Table 2).

Autonomy-supportive teachers help students improve their communication skills outside the classroom. Nevertheless, some teachers still control students. Reeve (2009) attributed this to the fact that teachers feel "pressures imposed from above (demands from school administrators), from below (student passivity during a learning activity), and from within (control-oriented dispositions within the teacher themselves)" (p. 160). According to Reeve, these reasons as a rationale for a controlling approach are understandable and commonplace, especially in Japan. However, Fukuda et al. (2011) insisted that it is critical to provide motivational lessons that foster learner autonomy skills.

2.6 Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Proposed by Reeve

The previous section mentioned the two types of teacher support: autonomy-supportive and controlling. Takai et al. (2020) made suggestions that teachers could apply an

autonomy-supportive teaching theory advocated by Reeve (2016) in Japanese elementary EFL classrooms. In addition, they claimed that autonomy support provides students the necessary learning environment and a good relationship with the teacher. Moreover, they stated that autonomy support is interpersonal relationship per se and is provided by the teacher to invigorate, nurture, develop, strengthen, and grow the resources of children's intrinsic learning motivations. Ideally, effective autonomous support is only possible if a relationship of trust is established between the teacher and students.

However, Fukuda et al. (2011) expressed that many students in a class would negatively affect learner autonomy and is nearly impossible and impractical for teachers as well. Moreover, the students might be confused and the teacher might become anxious. Therefore, teachers need experience to build a relationship of trust with the entire class. Tsuido and Tajiri (1997) claimed that a good communication between the teacher and students is essential for a successful class. In addition, inexperienced teachers require knowledge from teaching experience or from psychology or pedagogy.

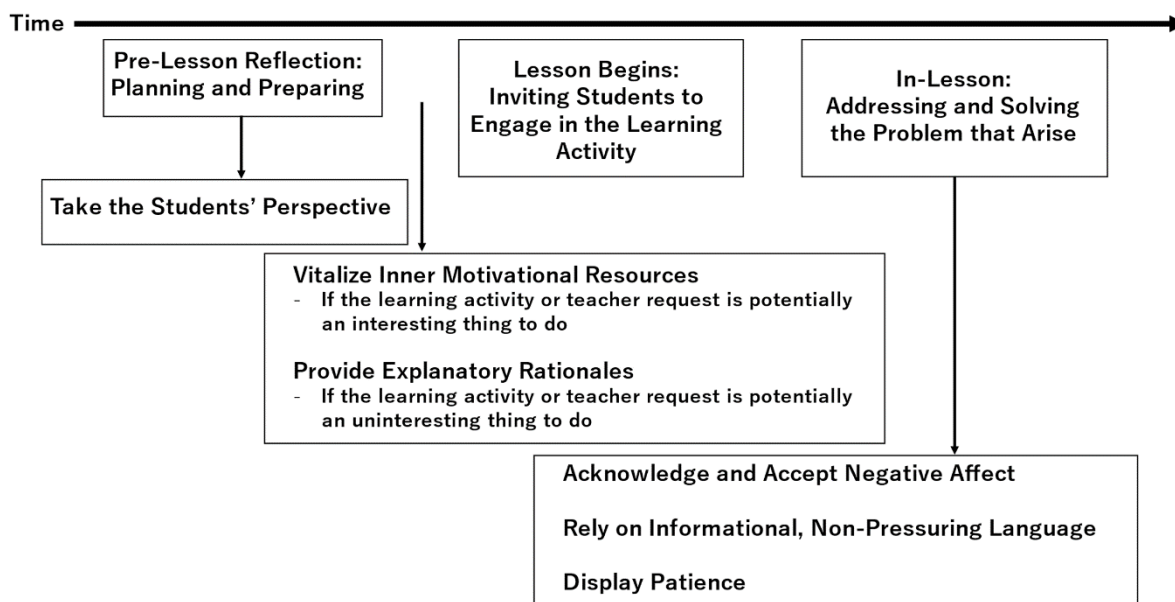
Meanwhile, even for inexperienced teachers, the autonomy-supportive method proposed by Reeve (2016) is considered to be concrete and feasible. Reeve divided the autonomy-supportive process into three stages: (1) prelesson reflection (preparation and planning), (2) start of the lesson (inviting students to engage in the learning activity), and (3)

in-lesson (addressing and solving the problems). Figure 3 presents the steps that the teacher should take in each stage.

If teachers have an effective approach for students in each stage, it would be easier for them to plan, monitor, and reflect on their lessons to effectively foster learner autonomy.

Figure 3

Reeve's (2016) Three Critical Motivational Moments in the Autonomy-Supportive Teaching



The following subsections described the three parts of each stage in detail. Moreover, a controlling approach does not always interfere with autonomy-supportive approach. Reeve (2016) presented the “observer’s rating sheet to score autonomy-supportive teaching” and “observers’ rating sheet to score controlling teaching.” According to him, these unipolar scales are vital because several classroom-based studies found that autonomy-supportive and

controlling instructional behaviors were negative correlated, but not so significantly (Assor et al., 2002; Assor et al., 2005).

Therefore, observing these low intercorrelations is critical because teachers sometimes act “in both autonomy-supportive and controlling ways (e.g., giving a command, yet offering an explanatory rationale)” (Reeve, 2016, p. 131). When using these scales, it is important that the definitions of autonomy-supportive and controlling teaching are well-understood.

2.6.1 Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing

First, in the stage of prelesson reflection: planning and preparing, according to Reeve (2016), the teacher elicits the student’s point of view and conceptualizes the student’s goals, priorities, preferences, and emotions. Reeve argued that by recognizing the student’s point of view while anticipating potential barriers, teachers can prepare seamless lessons that avoid these factors. Nevertheless, teachers must be careful not to ignore the students’ inner motivational resources. Hence, Reeve suggested that teachers consider the following: “Will students find this lesson to be need-satisfying, curiosity-provoking, interesting, and personally important?” and “How can I make this lesson need-satisfying, curiosity-provoking, interesting, and personally important to my students?” (p. 137). Experienced teachers may not ask themselves these questions if they are overconfident in their lessons.

However, it is highly recommended that new and experienced teachers should ask themselves such questions, and they must not forget the feeling of being close to the students.

Tsuido and Tajiri (1997) insisted that the important factors for teachers in building a good relationship with the students are to show affection that considers students their own children and prepare lessons that are enjoyable and easy to understand. In addition, they suggested that by showing the teachers' hard work, the students will be motivated to work hard as well. Eventually, they will enjoy the fulfillment of working toward the same goal.

Similarly, Daisy Mertens, Dutch *Teacher of the Year 2016*, stated the following:

As a teacher, I consider my primary role to be safeguarding the learning process by observing well. That's why together with my class I am constantly seeking to achieve connection and interaction on the basis of their genuine curiosity. This way, children learn to take responsibility [for] themselves and have the courage to ask questions: they take ownership of their own learning process. (Hooge, 2017, p. 45)

By closely observing and considering students' situations and feelings, teachers can foster students' autonomy with better relationships.

However, the aim of learning English is to improve students' abilities and not to meet the expectations of teachers. Thus, it is unclear if their motivation is due to the efforts of teachers or an external factor that wants to please a teacher. Nevertheless, teachers and

students develop meaningful lessons by working toward the same goals and deepening relationships of trust.

2.6.2 Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity

This second stage is a significant part because when teachers present dull activities for the day in the first part of the lesson, the students can be discouraged and lose interest.

According to Reeve (2016), autonomy-supportive teaching requires two factors when presenting a learning activity to promote the student engagement: “(1) vitalizing students’ inner motivational resources and (2) providing explanatory rationales” (p. 138).

In addition, Reeve (2016) determined the six elements that foster inner motivational resources for students: autonomy, competence, relatedness, curiosity, interest, and intrinsic goals. Reeve explained the rationale why these six elements are vital in making the students “a central part of the learning” and “it allows students to engage in lessons with an authentic sense of wanting to do it” (p. 139). To stimulate these inner motivations and promote students’ active participation in the lesson, it is important that teachers consider students’ viewpoint and in the planning and preparation of the lessons. Reeve insisted that teachers must recognize students’ inner motivation first.

Assor (2016) expressed that teachers often noticed that some students were uninterested and less enthusiastic in the lessons and not willing to try challenging tasks.

According to Assor, these students tend to avoid making efforts, thereby losing opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge. Therefore, as Reeve (2016) insisted, teachers should immediately provide rationales when they perceive that the students were uninterested in the given activities because these rationales promote student engagement, making these boring activities worth doing (Reeve, 2016). In addition, Reeve states that teachers need to have skills that foster students' willingness to engage in the lessons and to reveal students' hidden value (p. 142). Hence, Reeve presented three steps that teachers can reflect on:

The first is to think reflectively, "Why am I asking students to do this?"...The second skill is to generate satisfying rationales...The final skill is to provide the explanatory rationale prior to the behavioral request. (2016, pp. 142-143)

Reeve (2016) insisted that teachers should be aware of facilitating "the students' acceptance, willingness, and internalization before making a behavioral request" (p. 143). Therefore, the "rationale first, request second" approach should be implemented. If a trivial task is presented first, students may lose interest toward it, regardless of how much the teacher explains the rationale. Thus, as an effective technique to attracts students' interest, the "rationale first, request second" approach should be used.

2.6.3 In-lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise

Hoover (2006) expressed that even the most experienced teachers continue to discover the best way to deal with ongoing problem behaviors in the classroom. From his teaching experience, he finds out that “management of behavior must be integral to the overall implementation of classroom instruction” (p. 4). Classroom instruction consists of four components: “content, instructional strategies, instructional setting (e.g., small group, independent work), and student management of behaviors” (pp. 4-5).

However, as mentioned in the previous section, if teachers do not consider students’ feelings, students will be discouraged, which results in even greater issues. Reeve (2016) was concerned that if students have any problems during a lesson, they may raise serious issues related to “the quality of students’ classroom motivation, the quality of their learning experience, and the quality of the teacher–student relationship” (p. 143).

According to Reeve (2016), three problems are commonly occurring in a classroom: disengagement, misbehavior, and poor performance. Therefore, he offered solutions for the teachers to address these issues. First, teachers need to acknowledge and accept the negative effect of disengagement on students such as “complaints, resistance, protests, bad attitude, and negative emotion and affect” (p. 144). Second, teachers should use informational, nonpressuring languages. Third, teachers should display patience. According to Reeve, it is critical that teachers ask for any suggestions the students may have such as, “Okay. What

might we do differently this time – any suggestions?” (p. 145). However, this question is challenging for Japanese teachers because they tend to be reluctant to derail from their planned lessons.

Kan (2020) stated that Japanese teachers are afraid of complaints from parents if they skip a textbook unit or if they do not use something they have for the time being. However, English lessons that follow the textbook line by line elicit boring sessions. Therefore, Kan insisted that teachers should be confident in delivering the lessons, emphasizing the important parts of the lessons, and skipping or treating irrelevant things lightly. Kan (2021) also stated that teachers must deliver their lessons accordingly while always ensuring students’ understanding.

In addition, according to Reeve (2016), teachers must know how to respond when students elicit problematic behaviors. This is because if a teacher responds in a way that does not conform with the student’s feelings, they may continue to have a negative perspective toward the English lesson, which results in amplified aversion to the language. Therefore, teachers must always consider students’ feelings.

2.7 Research Questions

Based on the literature review in this chapter, the present study examines the recent challenges faced by English teachers regarding autonomous learning in Japan and the Netherlands, with the following five research questions:

1. What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
2. In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?
3. What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
4. How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
5. How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

By comparing the findings from the two countries, the researcher has considerably grasped the context within the Japanese EFL teaching, assessed the extent of the strategies for autonomy development used in their current practice, and identified new approaches that could be useful in promoting autonomous English learning, keeping up with the goals set by MEXT.

2.8 Conclusion of Chapter 2

Herein, regarding the definitions of learner autonomy, the researcher discussed Holec's (1981, p. 3) core idea, "ability to take charge of one's own learning." That is to say, autonomous learners are responsible for their own learning. According to Lennon (2012), learner autonomy is attainable by all language learners and teachers. Therefore, it can be utilized for elementary students for the current research. According to Yagcioglu (2015), learner autonomy, learner responsibility, and motivation are always correlated. This fact was found through research on learner autonomy. However, Japanese teachers have not recognized the significance of learner autonomy until recently.

Because the teacher's role in the classroom is to foster students' autonomy, it is important in English classes to encourage students to speak spontaneously, which should begin in elementary years. It was found that this led to the early acquisition of the target language. In addition, Reeve (2006) argued that teachers' support for developing learner autonomy and teacher control must be present in English classrooms. Also, Reeve advocated that SDT can be utilized not only in Western countries but also worldwide especially in Asian classrooms. Furthermore, Reeve and Jang (2006) argued about teachers' autonomy-supportive and controlling instructional behaviors with 21 factors covering the main categories of classroom events.

Moreover, the researcher discussed Reeve's (2016) three motivational stages in EFL classrooms: prelesson reflection, start of the lesson, and in-lesson. In addition, Reeve explained the autonomy-supportive and controlling teaching approaches. Therefore, Reeve's proposal stages revealed the means of teacher support and teacher control. Moreover, the researcher of the present study presented five research questions based on the literature review in this chapter. The next chapter presents the methods used in answering the research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Materials

This chapter presents the materials used to answer the five research questions. The researcher utilized a mixed-method research such as questionnaires for Japanese and Dutch teachers as quantitative research, semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals as qualitative research.

According to Riazi and Candlin (2014), “qualitative and quantitative phases of research can be mixed to achieve COMPLEMENTARITY” (emphasis in the original, p. 144). They explained that there are instances in which the results of one method or phase of research are used to support the development of another method or phase. For instance, the results of teacher interviews can be used to create a questionnaire that collects data from a broader and larger sample of teachers. As in the research by Admiraal et al. (2019), questionnaires were created and implemented based on the opinions expressed in the focus group meeting.

Another example, for development purposes, is when key findings from participant responses to questionnaires lead to further case studies to explore specific examples of these findings. Riazi and Candlin (2014) insisted that “a mix of these two methodologies provides a more comprehensive understanding of the object of study” (p. 136).

Complementary analysis of the results obtained from one data collection along with the additional data, therefore, makes the research results more convincing. Table 3 presents the research method used to answer each research question.

Table 3

Research Methods for Each Research Question

	Questionnaires to JTs and DTs		3) Semi-structured interviews	4) Textbook and teacher manual analysis
	1) Five-point Likert scale questions	2) Open-ended questions		
Research Question 1: What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	✓	✓	✓	
Research Question 2: In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research Question 3: What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	✓	✓	✓	
Research Question 4: How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?		✓	✓	✓
Research Question 5: How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?		✓	✓	✓

Herein, teachers' support for the development of learner autonomy was explored through the results of questionnaires and responses of semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers. The questionnaire has 39 five-point Likert scale questions, which are the same as those of Admiraal et al. (2019) (see Section 3.2.1.2.1).

Moreover, five open-ended questions were added, in which two of them are the same as those of Admiraal et al. (2019) as follows:

- In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
- In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently in order to promote the autonomy of your students?

Therefore, the researcher of the present study introduced three questions according to the research questions:

- How would you define learner autonomy?
- What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
- Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?

Regarding the five open-ended questions described above, the researcher asked the teachers to provide specific examples and supplementary explanations of their responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

A semi-structured interview was then conducted in which the researchers asked additional questions to gain deeper insights into the teachers' responses. Magaldi and Berler (2020) mentioned that the semi-structured interview will achieve a more thorough discovery in the process of interviews. When there is a specific or any topic that the interviewer wants to pursue during the interview, they should prepare the questions well in advance (Ruslin et al., 2022). Therefore, the researcher prepared specific questions related to learner autonomy

and asked additional questions to obtain specific examples that the teachers implement in classrooms.

In addition, analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals was conducted to investigate if teaching materials are made to promote and support learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands. It was also possible to corroborate the content of the analysis results of textbooks and teacher manuals by correlating them with interviews with teachers.

3.2 Procedures

This section presents the participants, instruments used, and analysis of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers and the instruments used for the analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals.

3.2.1 Questionnaires to Japanese and Dutch Teachers

To collect opinions regarding perceptions of learner autonomy and teacher support for developing learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands, the researcher used questionnaires for teachers in both the countries. The questionnaire has three sections: information on teachers who responded to the questionnaire (grade in charge, gender, and years of teaching English), 5-point Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The 5-point Likert scale questions were the same as the ones used by Admiraal

et al. (2019) because they already researched on the perception of autonomy support in elementary schools in the Netherlands.

In terms of the open-ended questions, the researcher of the present study used two of the three by Admiraal et al. (2019) and added three more questions (see more information in Section 3.2.1.2) in accordance with the purpose of the current study. The following subsections then present the participants of the present study, the procedure of the research, and the analysis.

3.2.1.1 Participants

Herein, the researcher needed Japanese and Dutch elementary teachers who could participate in the questionnaire survey. Regarding the sample size of the participants, Mustafa and Robillos (2020) explained it from an analytical point of view as follows:

A smaller sample size is allowed for the Chi-square test, which is also often in language pedagogy research. VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007, p. 48) and Camilli and Hopkins (1978, p. 165) suggested that the overall sample size is 20 and no less than 5 for each variable. In addition, the sample size for correlation and regression analyses should be larger in order for the analysis results to be meaningful, i.e., 50. (p. 444)

The data were analyzed using regression analyses after reliability tests, confirmatory factor analyses, and multivariate analysis of variance (see Section in 3.2.1.3 for the details of the

analysis). Therefore, at least 50 participants were required from both countries. Fortunately, 61 elementary teachers in Japan and 61 elementary teachers in the Netherlands responded to the questionnaires. The following subsections discuss the course of action the researcher did to obtain the study participants in each country.

3.2.1.1.1 Japanese Teachers

For the Japanese demographic, the researcher obtained a list and contact information of elementary schools from the website of the Shimane Prefectural Board of Education, where the researcher works as a JTE. According to the website, there are 200 public elementary schools (there are no private elementary schools in Shimane Prefecture)⁸ in 2022. The researcher then randomly selected 40 of the 200 elementary schools and sent letters written in Japanese requesting teachers' cooperation.

From April 2022, the researcher started preparing the letters to the principal questionnaires, mailed the letters in July 2022, and collected the questionnaire responses until January 2023. Therefore, responses were obtained from 61 teachers to the 5-point Likert scale questionnaires and two Japanese teachers included their email addresses to participate in the semi-structured interview. Afterwards, the researcher found three more Japanese teachers who could participate in the semi-structured interview (see Section 3.2.2.1 for further details).

⁸ Here is the website that provides information on elementary schools in Shimane Prefecture: <https://www3.pref.shimane.jp>

For ease of obtaining the questionnaire responses, the researcher included a Google Form link and a QR code in the request letters sent for teachers to respond online. Therefore, the teachers could respond at their own convenience using their computers, tablets, or smartphones. In addition, the researcher included the research purpose, affiliation, purpose of using the data, and strict observance of privacy protection of the respondents in the request letters. Moreover, it only takes 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The researcher stated that the identity of participants is unknown and that there was no way for the researcher to know their affiliation or personal information unless they include their contact information. Furthermore, participants were asked for consent before conducting the questionnaire.

At the end part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to cooperate with the semi-structured interview, in which they can input their contact information when they agreed to participate.

Figure 4 presents the corresponding grade levels: 16 teachers teach third grade, 14 teachers teach fourth grade, 11 teachers teach fifth grade, 14 teachers teach sixth grade, and 6 teachers teach English across grades but are not homeroom teachers.

Figure 4

Grades Taught by Japanese Teachers (N = 61)

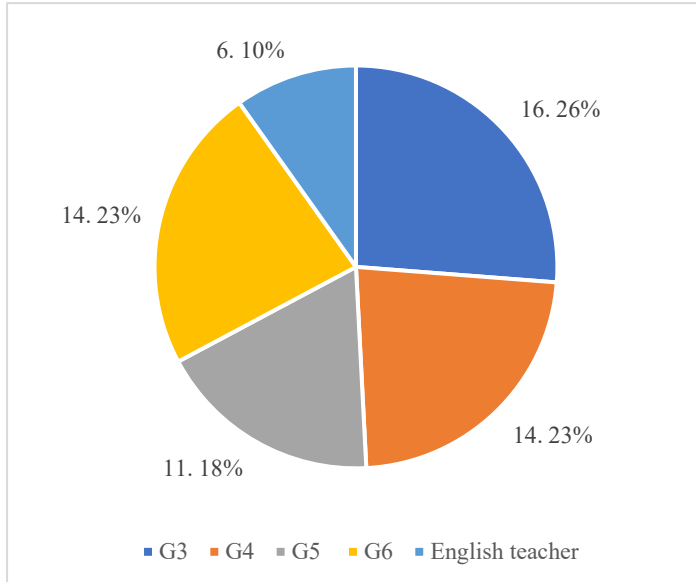


Figure 5 presents the gender balance of Japanese teachers: 34 were male, 26 were female, and 1 did not prefer to say.

Figure 5

Gender Balance of Japanese Teachers (N = 61)

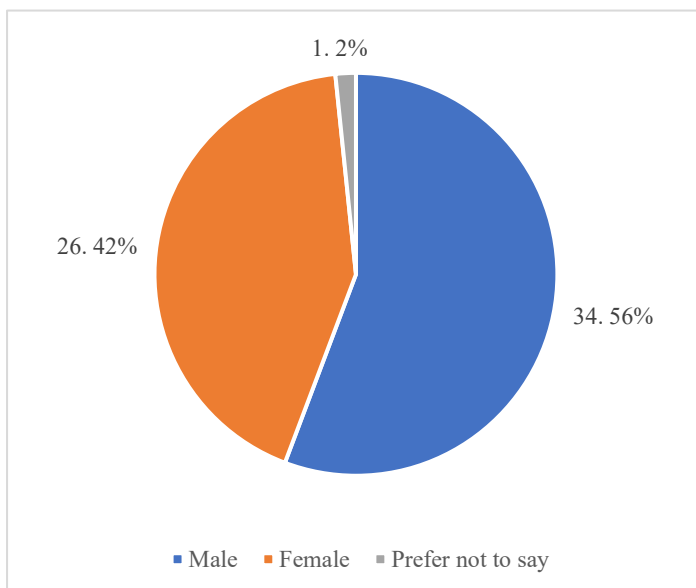
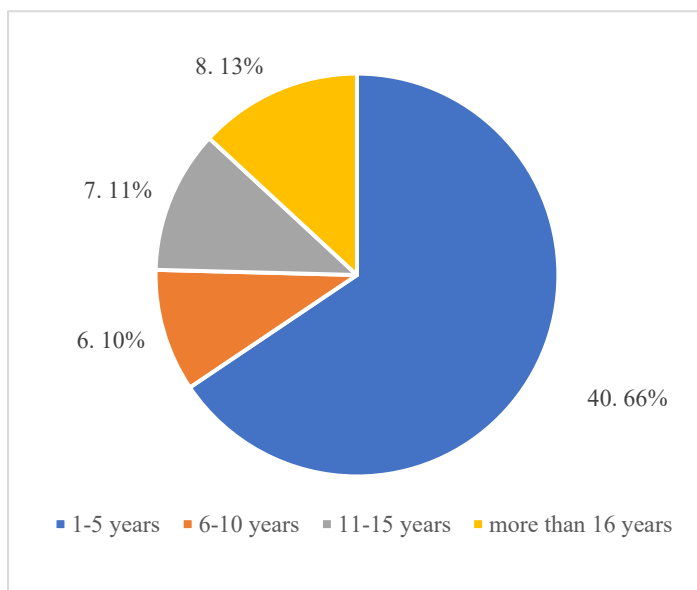


Figure 6 presents the teachers' English teaching experience: 40 teachers with 1–5 years, six teachers with 6–10 years, seven teachers with 11–15 years, and eight teachers with more than 16 years.

Figure 6

English Teaching Experience of Japanese Teachers (N = 61)



3.2.1.1.2 Dutch Teachers

In the Dutch demographic, the researcher contacted a Japanese teacher she found through an internet search who works at a local elementary school in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This teacher introduced the researcher to a Dutch English educator, who is an interpreter and translator and works as a freelance English teacher. He agreed to help the researcher look for research participants. Hereafter, this person is referred to as the Dutch intermediary.

The researcher prepared an English translation of the same request letters sent to the Japanese principals. Afterward, the Dutch intermediary translated them from English to Dutch because the researcher expected that the school principals would prefer a letter written in Dutch than in English. Meanwhile, Dutch teachers were requested to respond to the questionnaire in English because they are fluent in the language, which is also the case for Admiraal et al.'s (2019) questionnaires in that the Dutch teachers who participated in their survey responded in English.

In April 2022, the researcher started preparing the letters for the Dutch elementary school principals and the questionnaire. Afterward, once they were ready to be sent, the Dutch intermediary provided the researcher with a list of elementary schools across the Netherlands consisting of their school names, addresses, and websites. This list can be obtained from the website of the Dutch OCW.⁹ There were 6,075 public and private elementary schools that are implementing educational methods such as Montessori and Dolton on this list as of September 2022.

The researcher randomly sent emails to 430 out of the 6,075 Dutch elementary schools after the school summer vacation to ask them to participate in the questionnaire survey. Nevertheless, only ten Dutch teachers responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, the

⁹ Here is the website of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) offering elementary school information in the Netherlands: https://www.duo.nl/open_onderwijsdata/primair-onderwijs/scholen-en-adressen/hoofdvestigingen-basisonderwijs.jsp

researcher sent requests to the other 2,170 schools and also sent request letters via airmail to 250 schools, expecting some positive response of the letters sent directly from Japan. In total, the researcher has contacted 2,850 (2,600 schools by email and 250 schools by airmail) of the 6,075 Dutch elementary schools between September 2022 and January 2023. As a result, responses were obtained from 61 teachers to the 5-point Likert scale questionnaires, and five Dutch teachers participated in the semi-structured interview via Zoom (see Section 3.2.2.1 for details of the interview participants).

As for obtaining teacher responses to the questionnaires, the researcher included a Google Form link and a QR code in the request letters sent for teachers to respond online. Therefore, the teachers could respond to the questions using their computers, tablets, or smartphones on their own convenience, just like the Japanese teachers did.

In addition, the researcher included the research purpose, affiliation, purpose of using the data, and strict observance of privacy protection of the respondents in the request letters. Moreover, it only takes 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The researcher stated that the identity of participants is unknown and that there was no way for the researcher to know their affiliation or personal information unless they include their contact information. Furthermore, participants were asked for consent before conducting the questionnaire, which is also the same as for the Japanese demographic.

The corresponding grade levels managed by the 61 respondents were as follows: 14 Dutch teachers in the third grade, 15 Dutch teachers in the fourth grade, 14 Dutch teachers in the fifth grade, and 18 Dutch teachers in the sixth grade, as shown in Figure 7. Of note, there were no Dutch English teachers who teach across grades as observed in the Japanese demographic.

Figure 7

Grades Taught by Dutch Teachers (N = 61)

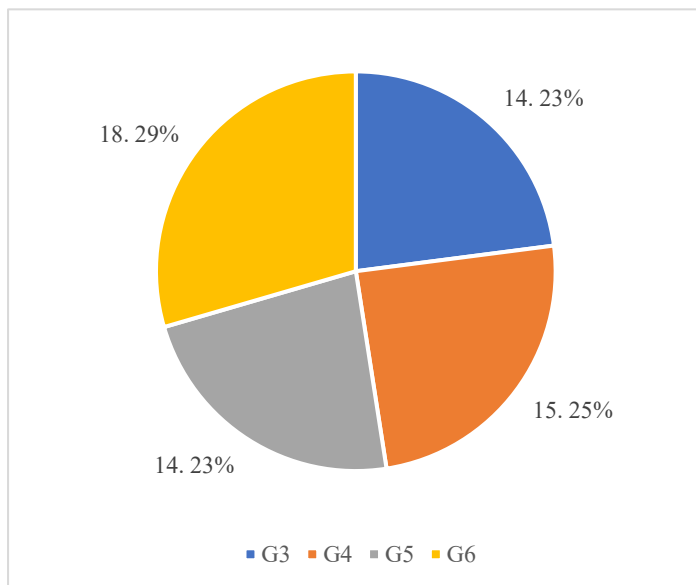
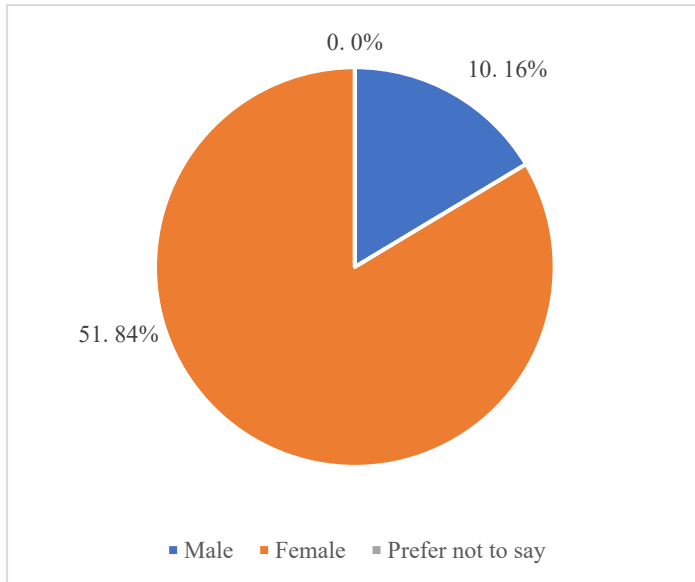


Figure 8 presents the Dutch teachers' gender ratio: 10 were male, 51 were female, and none who preferred not to say their gender.

Figure 8

Gender Balance of Dutch Teachers (N = 61)

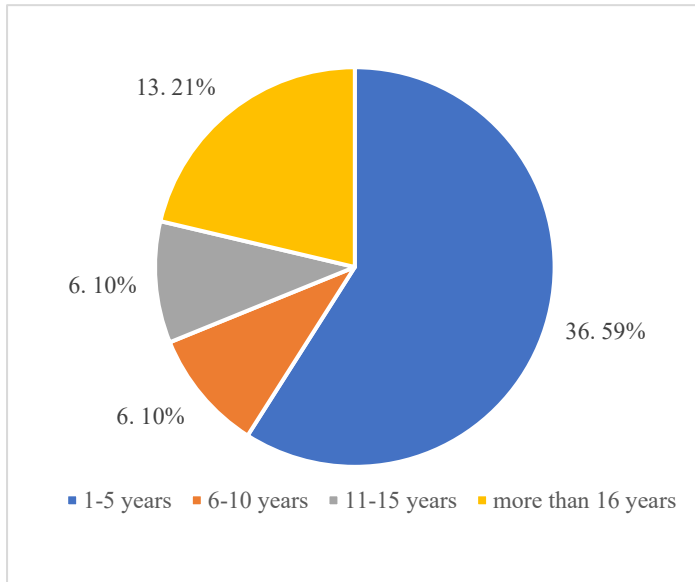


Regarding the male-to-female ratio, Goriot and van Hout (2023) researched on Dutch elementary teachers' beliefs about the effects of early English education. The participants were 99 classroom teachers, 10 were male and 89 were female (10.1% and 89.9%, respectively). According to them, this ratio is representative of the gender balance in Dutch elementary schools. Therefore, in this study, the gender ratio of Dutch participants was reasonable, with 16% and 84% of male and female teachers, respectively.

Regarding the English teaching experience of Dutch teachers, 36 had 1–5 years, 6 had 6–10 years, 6 had 11–15 years, and 13 had more than 16 years of teaching experience, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9

English Teaching Experience of Dutch Teachers (N = 61)



Consequently, 61 elementary school teachers on both demographics responded to the online questionnaire regardless of the differences in the grades managed, gender, and years of English teaching experience. Section 3.2.1.3 describes the adjustments in the analysis of these data.

3.2.1.2 Instruments

The questionnaire consists of three sections (see Appendix A). The first section asked for the attributes of the respondents: grades managed (“grades 3 to 6” and “other” for Japanese teachers and “groups 5 to 8” and “other” for Dutch teachers), gender (“male,” “female,” and “prefer not to say”), and years of English teaching experience (“1–5 years,” “6–10 years,” “11–15 years,” and “more than 16 years”).

Regarding the grades managed, in the Netherlands, elementary school starts from the age of 4, whereas in Japan, children start school at the age of 6. In the Netherlands, third graders in Japan are called group 5, fourth graders are called group 6, fifth graders are called group 7, and sixth graders are called group 8. Hence, to avoid confusion, the present study used the Japanese-style school year terminology.

The second section consists of 39 five-point Likert scale items that are similar as the ones used by Admiraal et al. (2019) (see Section 3.2.1.2.1). The third section consists of five open-ended questions, two of which were the same as those by Admiraal et al. and three were created according to the research questions of this research (see Section 3.2.1.2.2).

3.2.1.2.1 Five-point Likert Scale Questions

There are 39 five-point Likert scale questions divided into six aspects by Admiraal et al. (2019) as follows:

1. Freedom of choice (e.g., setting one's own goals, setting one's own time, and setting out one's own learning path)
2. Self-insight (e.g., understanding why they are doing something, knowing when they need help and dare to ask for it)
3. Self-expression (e.g., responsibility for own learning process, self-awareness, and being open, assertive, smart, and not easy to distract)

4. Curiosity (e.g., wanting to learn, having fun in school, and being intrinsically motivated for schooling)
5. Independence (e.g., promoting independence by planning the subject matter)
6. Problem-solving (e.g., working through a particular strategy to a solution) (p. 3)

Admiraal et al. (2019) created two kinds of question items (teacher items and student items) as they compared views on autonomy support for teachers and students. However, the present research compared teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy between Japanese and Dutch teachers; therefore, only the teacher items from Admiraal et al.'s paper were used.

The 39 five-point Likert scale question items created by Admiraal et al. (2019) have six aspects: eight items (items 1–8) for freedom of choice, seven items (items 9–15) for self-insight, five items (items 16–20) for self-expression, seven items (items 21–27) for problem-solving, six items (items 28–33) for curiosity, and six items (items 34–39) for independence. All these question items were responded according to the 5-point Likert scale [1: (almost) never, 2: sometimes, 3: quite often, 4: very often, and 5: (almost) always]. For the Japanese teachers, the Japanese translation was used [1: (ほとんど)まったくそうではない, 2: 時々そうである, 3: 結構そうである, 4: かなり頻繁にそうである, 5: (ほとんど)いつもそうである)], as shown in Appendix B. Notable points that emerged after translating into Japanese are mentioned after the question items in English. Regarding the language of the questionnaire, the items in the questionnaire used by Admiraal et al. (2019) were written in English, and

Dutch teachers responded in English as well. Therefore, the researcher of the present study used the same English questionnaire for Dutch elementary teachers because can respond in English. However, 6 of the 61 Dutch teachers responded to the open-ended questions in Dutch; therefore, the Dutch intermediary translated those parts into English as per the researcher's request.

On the contrary, the researcher predicted that it was difficult for the Japanese elementary teachers to respond to the English items; therefore, they were translated into Japanese, which were checked by a bilingual (English and Japanese) teacher for reliability and precision.

Furthermore, the researcher asked the staff of the Matsue City Board of Education to assess if the items are appropriate for Japanese elementary teachers because the original items were created based on the discussion in a focus group meeting among Dutch elementary teachers in their educational context. Therefore, the researcher was concerned that the questions were not relevant in the Japanese elementary school context. Thus, the researcher has added specific examples to foster ease of understanding for Japanese elementary teachers, which were also evaluated by the staff of the Matsue City Board of Education. Afterward, they provided the researcher with some suggestions to change some terms for Japanese elementary teachers to thoroughly understand the meaning of the questions. For instance, in the Japanese version, specific examples were added as follows:

- Item 6: My students can choose where they work. For this item, “Where in the classroom? (教室内のどこで行うか)” was added at the end of the question.
- Item 34: My students can find something easily (in the classroom) when they need it. For this item, “writing utensils, etc. used in the activity (活動で使用する筆記用具等)” was added at the end of the question.
- Item 36: I try to let my students work undisturbed. For this item, “undisturbed from classmates (クラスメート等から)” was added in the middle of the question.
- Item 37: It is clear where everything is. For this item, “e.g., a tablet or a textbook and so on (例：タブレット、教科書など)” was added at the end of the question.

Even in Dutch questionnaires, items 33 and 34 were provided with examples for Dutch teachers to thoroughly understand them.

- Item 33: I try to tell (about the lesson content of the day) in a captivating way. For this item, “(about the lesson content of the day)” was added in the middle of the question.
- Item 34: My students can find something easily (in the classroom) when they need it. For this item, “(in the classroom)” was added in the middle of the question.

These adjustments made it easier for the teachers to respond to the questionnaire.

3.2.1.2.2 *Open-ended Questions*

For the open-ended questions, the researcher used two questions from that of Admiraal et al. (2019) and provided three more questions related to the research questions of this current study. As for their Japanese translation, the researcher proceeded the same way as the 5-point Likert scale questions, that is, the researcher's bilingual acquaintance checked the reliability of the Japanese translation, and then the staff of the Matsue City Board of Education assessed them to check if Japanese teachers can respond without any misunderstandings. The five open-ended questions were as follows:

1. How would you define learner autonomy?
「学習者の自律性」をどのように定義しますか。
2. In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
ご回答者様は、児童の自律性をどのように促進しようと努めていますか。
3. In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?
理想的な状況下で、児童の自律性を促進するとしたら何をしたいですか。
4. What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
児童が自律的に学習することが妨げられているとすれば原因は何だと思えますか。
5. Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?
ご回答者様のクラスで児童の自律性育成のために実施されていることで、日本独自だと思われることがありますか？

In Admiraal et al.'s (2019) study, the first open-ended question was as follows: “What do you think about the autonomy of pupils in primary education?” (p. 11). However, this was a broad question for Japanese teachers. Hence, to determine Japanese and Dutch teachers' specific perceptions of autonomy, the first research question of this study was changed to,

“What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?”.

The researcher of the current study used the same items for the second and third open-ended questions as that of Admiraal et al. (2019), because these two questions answer the second (In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?)” and third research question (What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?) of this present study.

The fourth open-ended question was added to answer the fourth research question of the present study (How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?). Finally, the fifth open-ended question was added to answer the fifth research question (How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?) in the present study. The researcher of the present study used these questions to elicit Japanese and Dutch teachers’ views regarding the hindrance of learner autonomy and its cultural effects.

3.2.1.3 Analysis

This section presents the methods used to analyze the responses of the 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

3.2.1.3.1 Five-point Likert Scale Questions

Reliability tests and confirmatory factor analyses were used to analyze the responses of 61 Japanese and 61 Dutch teachers. The items consist of six factors: freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence. Therefore, when the confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, these six factors were used to assess goodness-of-fit indices (see Hamada, 2020, p. 163). However, the quality of fit for each factor on the Japanese demographic was poor, while the quality of fit on the Dutch demographic was acceptable.

At the next stage of analysis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to confirm for any significant differences between the results from the Japanese and Dutch demographics. However, even if there are significant differences in the results, MANOVA cannot prove which factors have significant differences and to what extent.

Thus, multiple regression analysis was used to compare the results of Japanese and Dutch teachers for each factor mentioned. However, owing to the imbalance in the male–female ratio of the Japanese and Dutch respondents, necessary adjustments were made to minimize this imbalance on the analysis results. Hence, multiple regression analysis was conducted after adjusting for gender, with the *p*-values adjusted using the Bonferroni method. *P*-values of 0.05 or less are generally regarded as significant differences between the subject groups; however, in this study, it was necessary to consider the six factors when analyzing for

significant differences. Therefore, using the Bonferroni method, 0.05 was divided by 6, and the calculated p -value of 0.0083 was the criterion for significance. Then, based on the Japanese demographic results, the researcher of the present study calculated the Dutch coefficients for each of the six factors and compared which factor had the most significant difference.

3.2.1.3.2 Open-ended Questions

To analyze 61 Japanese and 61 Dutch teachers' responses, KH Coder 3.Beta.03i (Higuchi, 2016) and the grounded theory approach (GTA) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were utilized. Before the analysis, the unambiguous response rate among the Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses to each open-ended question was checked (see Table 4).

The responses such as "I don't know" or "I have no idea" (*wakarimasen* or *omoitsukimasen* in Japanese, respectively) were excluded from the analysis in advance. Note that only the fifth question (Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?) elicited many ambiguous responses. This is unsurprising because the teachers in either country had never considered an international comparison.

Table 4*Unambiguous Response Rate for the Open-Ended Questions (OEQs)*

Question Items in English and Japanese	Japan (n = 61)	The Netherlands (n = 61)
OEQ1: How would you define learner autonomy? 「学習者の自律性」をどのように定義しますか。	93.4% (57)	96.7% (59)
OEQ2: In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class? ご回答者様は、児童の自律性をどのように促進しようと努めていますか。	93.4% (57)	98.4% (60)
OEQ3: In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students? 理想的な状況下で、児童の自律性を促進するとしたら何をしたいですか。	93.4% (57)	93.4% (57)
OEQ4: What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy? 児童が自律的に学習することが妨げられているとすれば原因は何だと思えますか。	96.7% (59)	98.4% (60)
OEQ5: Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy? ご回答者様のクラスで児童の自律性育成のために実施されていることで、日本独自と思われることがありますか？	37.7% (23)	45.9% (28)

Note. For both the Japanese and Dutch sides, the numbers in parentheses below the percentages for each question item are the number of unambiguous responses.

According to Higuchi (2016), it is important to clarify the aim of the analysis before conducting it because text mining has a high degree of freedom. Five open-ended questions that were meant to compare Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses were analyzed using a cooccurrence network with two countries, Japan and the Netherlands, as external variables. The researcher of the present study set the KH Coder to reflect that "words with same basic form are recognized to be identical even if the POS is different"; hence, the words in the same group were regarded as synonyms during the analysis.

Consequently, a cooccurrence network diagram for each of the five questions was presented. In the middle of the said diagram, there is a point where the results from Japan and the Netherlands overlap (i.e., words and phrases that were common to the teachers' responses

from both the countries). Additionally, teachers from Japan and the Netherlands responded separately, and words that did not overlap were indicated by a line extending from each country. Higuchi (2016) proposed a qualitative analysis of how the extracted words were used in the actual responses to the questionnaire to analyze the results using the KH Coder. Therefore, the researcher of the present study cited the answers to the questionnaire and qualitatively analyzed the meanings of the frequently used words and the words that are regarded as unique characteristics of Japan and the Netherlands.

However, it was difficult to examine all the responses obtained from 122 teachers in Japan and the Netherlands because only the vocabulary on the cooccurrence network is shown by the KH Coder. Therefore, the GTA advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used, and the unambiguous responses to the open-ended questions were coded and further conceptualized.

Hadley (2017) explained that “the methodology of grounded theory, as with most qualitative research, begins in an open-ended, exploratory manner. It becomes more specific as the research progresses” (p. 31). Hadley’s advice is to “Start grouping together any open codes that, based on your interaction with the data up to this point, seem to have something in common” (p. 111).

Core categories are finally created from several similar coded concepts. The results section presents the conceptualized items using a diagram that shows the Japanese side, the

Dutch side, and common factors for both countries. Moreover, the section on the analysis of semi-structured interviews explains the GTA theory (see Section 3.2.2.3).

Along with the information obtained from the words written in the questionnaire by Japanese and Dutch teachers that appeared in the cooccurrence network analyzed using the KH Coder, by looking at the concepts after coding by the GTA, the descriptions of the open-ended questions were complementary analyzed.

3.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Japanese and Dutch Teachers

After conducting the online survey, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with five teachers from each country. The rationale for conducting the interviews was explicitly as follows.

After quantitatively identifying the views of Japanese and Dutch teachers on learner autonomy via the survey, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews for an in-depth investigation their views regarding learner autonomy (see Section 3.2.2.2 for the interview questions). The researcher asked for any specific episodes and examples they could provide. The researcher then qualitatively compared the teachers' views on learner autonomy between both countries more concretely and used them to support the results in the quantitative research.

According to Ruslin et al. (2022), questions asked during a structured interview are formalized and have a limited set, whereas in a semi-structured interview, they are more flexible, that is, new or follow-up questions can be asked during the interview. Herein, the researcher prepared the question items beforehand and asked additional questions depending on participants' responses during the interview.

However, George (2022) cautioned researchers that the data collection and analysis might be more complex because the questions are less organized than in a structured interview. Thus, the researcher of the present study was always careful not to deviate from the theme of this research, learner autonomy.

The following subsections present the participants in Japan and the Netherlands, instruments used such as interview question items, the sequence of interview questions, and the analyses conducted.

3.2.2.1 Participants

The researcher has indicated in the questionnaire that Japanese respondents can participate in the semi-structured interviews either face-to-face or via Zoom and Dutch respondents can participate via Zoom. Consequently, two teachers from Japan and five teachers from the Netherlands offered their cooperation in the semi-structured interviews (face-to-face for the Japanese teachers and via Zoom for the Dutch teachers). Later, three

more Japanese teachers participated in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, bringing the total to five Japanese and five Dutch teachers. The following subsections present the details of these teachers.

3.2.2.1.1 Japanese Teachers

Two Japanese teachers included their email addresses on the Google Form questionnaire to indicate their willingness to participate in the semi-structured interviews in July 2022. These teachers (hereinafter referred to as JT 1 and JT 2) work at the same elementary school (hereinafter referred to as Japanese Elementary School 1 for anonymity) in Shimane Prefecture, where the researcher works as a JTE. The researcher contacted them to arrange the date and time of the semi-structured interview. JT 1 and JT 2 wanted to be interviewed face-to-face in August 2022 during the summer vacation at the elementary school where they work.

As mentioned in Section 3.2.2.1.2, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews via Zoom with five Dutch teachers. Moreover, to ensure the same number of interviewees from both the countries, the researcher looked for three more Japanese teachers who agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews.

Fortunately, three Japanese teachers from the same elementary school as JT 1 and JT 2 agreed for the interview, and these teachers confirmed that they had already responded to

the Google Form questionnaire. These three Japanese teachers (hereinafter referred to as JT 3, JT 4, and JT 5) agreed to be interviewed face-to-face in February 2023 after the class at the elementary school where they work. Table 5 presents information regarding the Japanese participants.

Table 5

School and Teacher Information of Interviewed Japanese Teachers (JTs)

	JT 1	JT 2	JT 3	JT 4	JT 5
School location	Shimane Prefecture	Shimane Prefecture	Shimane Prefecture	Shimane Prefecture	Shimane Prefecture
Anonymous school name	Japanese Elementary School 1	Japanese Elementary School 1	Japanese Elementary School 1	Japanese Elementary School 1	Japanese Elementary School 1
School type	Public school	Public school	Public school	Public school	Public school
Grade	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 3
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Teaching experience	1 year	5 years	20 years	4 years	1 year
Age	23 years old	31 years old	60s	27 years old	24 years old

JT 1 to JT 5 work at the Japanese Elementary School 1, which is a public school in Shimane Prefecture. JT 1 is a fifth-grade homeroom teacher, JT 2 is a sixth-grade homeroom teacher, JT 3 is a fourth-grade homeroom teacher, and JT 4 and JT 5 are third-grade homeroom teachers.

As for their gender, JT 1 and JT 2 are male, and JT 3 to JT 5 are female. Regarding their age and English teaching experience, JT 1 is 23 years old with experience of 1 year, JT 2 is 31 years old with 5 years of experience, JT 3 is in her 60s with 20 years of experience, JT 4 is 27 years old with 4 years of experience, and JT 5 is 24 years old with experience of 1 year.

3.2.2.1.2 Dutch Teachers

On the Dutch demographic, five teachers included their email addresses on the Google Form questionnaire to indicate their willingness to participate in semi-structured interviews between September 2022 and January 2023. The researcher then contacted these five Dutch teachers (hereinafter referred to as DT 1 to DT 5 for anonymity) to arrange the date and time for the semi-structured interviews, which were conducted via Zoom between November 2022 and January 2023. Table 6 presents the Dutch participants' information.

Table 6

School and Teacher Information of Interviewed Dutch Teachers (DTs)

	DT 1	DT 2	DT 3	DT 4	DT 5
School location	Utrecht Province	Utrecht Province	Utrecht Province	South Holland Province	South Holland Province
Anonymous school name	Dutch Elementary School 1	Dutch Elementary School 1	Dutch Elementary School 2	Dutch Elementary School 3	Dutch Elementary School 4
School type	Public school (Government-funded school)	Public school (Government-funded school)	General special (Government-funded school)	Roman Catholic (Government-funded school)	Protestant (Government-funded school)
Grade	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 6
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female
Teaching experience	4 years	5 years	5 years	10 years	12 years
Age	43 years old	46 years old	64 years old	50s	36 years old

Regarding their school location, DT 1 to DT 3 work in elementary schools located in Utrecht Province, and DT 4 and DT 5 work in elementary schools located in South Holland Province.

DT 1 and 2 work at the same elementary school, which is referred to as Dutch Elementary School 1 for privacy. Moreover, the elementary schools where DT 3, DT 4, and

DT 5 work are referred to as Dutch Elementary School 2, Dutch Elementary School 3, and Dutch Elementary School 4, respectively.

Regarding the type of schools,¹⁰ Dutch Elementary School 1 is a public school, Dutch Elementary School 2 is a general special school, Dutch Elementary School 3 is a Roman Catholic school, and Dutch Elementary School 4 is a Protestant Christian school. However, all of them operated with government funding.

Regarding the grade levels, all of them are homeroom teachers who teach English. DT 1 is a third-grade homeroom teacher, DT 2 and DT 5 are sixth-grade homeroom teachers, and DT 3 and DT 4 are fifth-grade homeroom teachers. As for genders, DT 1, DT 3, DT 4, and DT 5 are female, and DT 2 is male. Regarding their age and English teaching experience, DT 1: 43 years old, 4 years of experience, DT 2: 46 years old, 5 years of experience, DT 3: 64 years old, 5 years of experience, DT 4: in her 50s, with the exact age not disclosed by her own volition, 10 years of experience, and DT 5: 36 years old, 12 years of experience.

According to DT 1 and DT 2, they changed their careers from researchers to teachers. As for DT 3, she used to teach lower graders who had not started studying English yet. Therefore, considering the ages of DT 1 to DT 3, it can be perceived that the number of years of teaching English is either 5 years or less.

¹⁰ The types of elementary schools in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science: <https://www.government.nl/topics/primary-education/types-of-primary-school>

3.2.2.2 Instruments

This section presents the process of the semi-structured interviews with JT 1 to JT 5 and DT 1 to DT 5, before they were conducted. In addition, it presents the process of requesting for informed consent of participants of both countries and its data collection, the question items of the semi-structured interviews with JT 1 to JT 5 and DT 1 to DT 5, and the sequence of the questions.

3.2.2.2.1 Japanese Teachers

Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepared an informed consent that included the purpose of the study, researcher's contact information, strict protection of data, confidentiality agreement, and pseudonymization agreement, which were written in Japanese for Japanese teachers. The researcher handed two copies (for the researcher and the participant) of the informed consent to each participant and asked them to sign them if they agreed to participate in this study. The researcher explained that each interview would take around 20 minutes.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Japanese for JT 1 to JT 5. Before their interviews, the researcher informed each participant that the interview would be audio-recorded and that the data would be deleted once the study was completed. However, JT 3

refused to be audio-recorded and only allowed a written recording. Therefore, the researcher transcribed as much information as possible from JT 3 during her semi-structured interview.

According to George (2022), there are certain advantages of semi-structured interviews, described as the best of both worlds, because elements of structured and unstructured interviews are combined. The interviewers can obtain comparable, reliable data and had the flexibility to ask follow-up questions. In addition, George stated that semi-structured interviews allow interviewers to obtain more detailed and rich data by asking open-ended questions. Moreover, George mentioned that participants can also articulate and paraphrase their own words during the interview. Thus, this gave a room for the researcher to ask for detailed examples based on their responses.

Before moving to the main topic, the researcher mentioned the purpose of the study and the interview and acknowledged them for participating in the online survey and the semi-structured interview. In addition, the researcher asked easy questions first, such as the size of their class and their years of teaching English, to make the participants comfortable.

The researcher then asked JT 1 to JT 5 to provide detailed information and concrete examples of their Google Form questionnaire responses, which they responded in Japanese. Moreover, the researcher asked the participants the questions according to the order of the items, which is based on their definition of autonomy. Afterward, the researcher asked them

their current and future efforts in fostering learner autonomy and if they faced any challenges in their English classes.

The researcher thought that if the interviewees were able to form a definition of learner autonomy, they would find it easier to answer the next question based on their definition. Finally, the researcher asked for any cultural factors that influence learners' autonomy. The researcher decided to make this the final question because it might take the most time to think about, so it would be feasible after they expanded their thoughts with the previous questions.

1. How would you define learner autonomy?
「学習者の自律性」をどのように定義しますか。
2. In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
ご回答者様は、児童の自律性をどのように促進しようと努めていますか。
3. In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?
理想的な状況下で、児童の自律性を促進するとしたら何をしたいですか。
4. What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
児童が自律的に学習することが妨げられているとすれば原因は何だと思えますか。
5. Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?
ご回答者様のクラスで児童の自律性育成のために実施されていることで、日本独自だと思われることがありますか？

Furthermore, to elicit more specific stories from the participants, the researcher asked them to share more detailed explanations and past experiences as possible. However, the researcher was careful to always ask questions related to the theme of this research, that is, learner autonomy. Each semi-structured interview lasted 20 minutes as scheduled.

3.2.2.2.2 Dutch Teachers

On the Dutch demographic, nine Dutch teachers agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews and included their email addresses on the online survey conducted between September 2022 and January 2023. Nevertheless, four of the nine Dutch teachers cannot participate in the semi-structured interviews owing to a lack of time. Hence, only five Dutch teachers managed to arrange the date and time for the semi-structured interviews.

The researcher conducted interviews with these five teachers (DT 1 to 5) via Zoom before their classes in the morning or after their classes in the afternoon. All five Dutch teachers specified their school as the location of the Zoom interview in an empty classroom or the teacher's office. The interview time required 20 minutes for each teacher.

Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher sent an informed consent by email detailing the purpose of the study, the researcher's contact information, strict protection of data, confidentiality agreement, and pseudonymization agreement, which were written in English. The researcher asked DT 1 to DT 5 to print the consents and sign them if they agreed to participate in this study. Afterward, all of them returned a copy to the researcher by email before the semi-structured interview.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English because DT 1 to DT 5 confirmed that they can be interviewed in English. Moreover, before their interviews, each participant was informed that the interview would be video- or audio-recorded and that the

data would be deleted once the study was completed. DT 3 and DT 5 agreed to be video-recorded, whereas DT 1, DT 2, and DT 4 agreed to be audio-recorded only. Therefore, only DT 3 and DT 5 could be recorded with their facial expressions and gestures.

Before getting to the main topic, the researcher mentioned the purpose of the study and the interview and thanked them for participating in the online survey and the semi-structured interview. In addition, the researcher asked them easy questions first, such as the size of their class and their years of teaching English, to make the participants comfortable, just as the researcher did for JT 1 to JT 5 as well.

Afterward, the researcher asked DT 1 to DT 5 to provide detailed information and concrete examples of their questionnaire responses. The sequence of the questions is the same as that with the Japanese teachers as follows:

1. How would you define learner autonomy?
2. In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
3. In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?
4. What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
5. Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?

Moreover, to elicit more specific stories from the participants, the researcher asked them to share more detailed explanations and past experiences as possible. At that time, the researcher was careful to always ask questions related to the theme of this research, that is, learner autonomy. Each semi-structured interview lasted 20 minutes as scheduled.

DT 3 gave a tour around the elementary school where she works during her Zoom interview. In addition, she showed the researcher the places where students usually study (the halls, not the classrooms) and the resting areas for the teachers. The interview was conducted after school, so the students had already gone home, and some Dutch teachers were on their tea break and greeted the interviewer. Moreover, she sent the researcher some photographs of the classrooms and students studying in the study place after the semi-structured interview. With DT 3's approval, some of these photographs will be presented in the results chapter in the present research.

3.2.2.3 Analysis

Once all scheduled semi-structured interviews were completed, the collected data were ready for analysis. Drever (2003) suggested three stages to analyzing semi-structured interviews: (1) data preparation, (2) categorizing and reorganizing the prepared data and finding patterns related to the research questions, and (3) summarizing the results. As for the first stage, the researcher listened to the audio-recorded data of the semi-structured interviews

of both demographics repeatedly and transcribed them except for that of JT 3 because her interview data was already transcribed (see Section 3.2.2.3.1).

According to Friedman (2012), transcription involves many decisions by the interviewer. For instance, if the interviewer utilizes standard orthography or reflecting pronunciation using a phonetic alphabet or nonstandard spelling (e.g., becuz for because); uses imperfect speech such as hesitation markers (e.g., er, uh), cutoffs and restarts (e.g., I thi- I thought...), or pauses or fillers (e.g., I was like, you know); or uses nonverbal features (e.g., eye gaze, or gestures) (p. 190). The researcher chose to transcribe the interviewees' pronunciation, spelling, restatements, and poses as raw data. However, JT 3 was an exception because she refused to be audio-recorded. Only DT 3 and DT 5 were video-recorded, and JT 1, JT 2, JT 4, and JT 5 and DT 1, DT 2, and DT 4 were only audio-recorded; hence, their nonverbal cues, except for DT 3 and DT 5, were not recorded.

As for the second stage, the researcher utilized the modified grounded theory approach (M-GTA) proposed by Kinoshita (2003) for the analysis of English education research. Before mentioning M-GTA, however, it is important to mention the grounded theory approach first. According to Friedman (2012), content analysis is one of the common approaches for qualitative data analysis to find patterns and develop well-grounded interpretations. Furthermore, Friedman expressed that Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated the following: "One of the most widely used approaches to content analysis is grounded theory,

which was developed by social scientists Glaser and Strauss (1967) to strengthen the validity and reliability of qualitative analysis” (Friedman, 2012, p. 191).

Hadley (2017) elaborated on the GTA in language teaching research. He summarized techniques used in the grounded theory matrix. According to Hadley, there is a pyramid stage, and from the bottom, there are open exploration, focused investigation, and theory generation. Open exploration comprises open sampling, repertory grids, open coding, exploratory interviews, observations, and memos. It then goes up to focused investigation, in which six elements are used such as theoretical sampling, focused coding, in-depth interviews, scholarly literature, observations, and memos. Lastly, it goes up to theory generation, in which further five elements are considered such as conceptual categories, dimensional analysis, enhanced axial coding, follow-up research, and memos. However, to determine theory generation, the researcher needs to reflect on focused investigation again considering four elements such as core category or main concern, abduction, theoretical expansion, and memos (see Hadley’s Figure 6.6 p. 131).

The above techniques proposed by Hadley (2017) indicate the importance of using GTA for the analysis of semi-structured interviews. However, according to Kinoshita (2003), the original GTA advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) did not explain how to do coding. Therefore, Kinoshita proposed a unique method of coding, which has been a problem in Glaser’s approach, while retaining the characteristics of the original version. Furthermore,

Kinoshita emphasized the deep interpretation rather than the exhaustive segmentation of the data, with coding work and its conceptualization.

Kinoshita (2003) was concerned that fragmenting the data would create a multitude of codes, making it difficult to converge and creating a greater challenge for researchers.

Therefore, in M-GTA, while emphasizing the principle of GTA, that is, the rigor of analysis, Kinoshita did not slice data and emphasized understanding the context of the data. He then proposed to examine the perceptions, actions, and emotions of the interviewees faithfully and the factors and conditions found in the data.

Furthermore, Kinoshita (2003) proposed creating an analysis worksheet in a Word file or the like. According to him, the researcher should create one concept on one worksheet, which includes the definition of the concept, specific examples (called variations) quoted from the interview, and theoretical notes (e.g., important ideas other than those described in the definition). According to Kinoshita, there is no fixed number of concepts for the analysis of one study; however, as a guide, 10–20 concepts are appropriate. This is usually followed by categorizing them and making a result chart. Moreover, Kinoshita suggested creating a storyline summarizing the results and discussion before presenting the results in the paper.

Kambaru (2018) stated that M-GTA has been used only in Japan, even though the original GTA has been frequently used worldwide. Therefore, to encourage widespread use of M-GTA to more researchers, she showed a concrete example of analysis of research results

using M-GTA. The following subsections presents the methods used to analyze the data of the semi-structured interviews.

3.2.2.3.1 Japanese Teachers

In the first stage of the analysis, the researcher transcribed the recorded data from the semi-structured interviews. Because interviews of JT 1, 2, 4, and 5 were in Japanese, the researcher transcribed them in Japanese and then translated them into English. Meanwhile, JT 3's interview was already written down in Japanese, and the researcher translated it into English. A Japanese–English bilingual teacher checked the English translations for reliability.

Afterward, all transcriptions were divided into each narrative in an Excel file: open-coding, coding, definition, category, and notes. According to Kinoshita (2003), there must be one code in one line. The researcher then divided all narratives of JT 1 to JT 5 into 111 codes. Next, the researcher read these narratives several times carefully to be open-coded. Once all narratives were open-coded, the researcher created analysis worksheets as per Kambaru's (2018) instruction, examining sentences with similar patterns, which were gathered and provided a concept name. In total, 13 concepts in 13 analysis worksheets were made, followed by categories.

Then, for each of the research questions 1 to 5, closely related categories were connected with arrows indicating their respective correlations, and a result chart was made,

because Kambaru (2018) suggested that “M-GTA requires that *Analytical Themes* be clarified, meaning research questions need to be composed” (p. 53). In addition, she instructed that “a diagram with descriptions of the relationships among concepts, categories, and core-categories is developed according to the results” (p. 54). Moreover, a storyline was created, “which is a narrative theme with the words of concepts, categories, and core-categories, is presented” (p. 54).

The results shown in this diagram and storyline are compared with the diagram created in the same way on the Dutch demographic. Furthermore, the results of the Dutch demographic are added to the storyline, and the results according to the research questions are compared between the two countries.

3.2.2.3.2 Dutch Teachers

Similar to the analysis process on the Japanese demographic, the researcher transcribed the semi-structured interviews first (audio-recorded for DT 1, DT 2, and DT 4 and video-recorded for DT 3 and DT 5). DT 1 to DT 5 responded to the semi-structured interviews in English, so all recorded data were transcribed in English. After the researcher read the transcribed data multiple times to check the content, a Japanese–English bilingual teacher who was an acquaintance of the researcher read the transcription and checked its

accuracy. In addition, she confirmed the parts from the audio-recorded data that were not clear for the researcher.

Afterward, all transcriptions were divided into each narrative in an Excel file: open-coding, coding, definition, category, and notes, which was done on the Japanese demographic as well. DT 1 to DT 5 stated a total of 113 narratives. The researcher then read these narratives several times carefully to be open-coded. Once all narratives were open-coded, the researcher created analysis worksheets, examining sentences with similar patterns, which are gathered and provided a concept name. In total, 13 concepts in 13 analysis worksheets were made, followed by categories. The number of concepts was the same as those on the Japanese demographic. After that, they were divided into categories, shown in diagrams, and the researcher wrote a storyline. The storyline presented the analytical results comparing the results of the two countries.

3.2.3 Textbook and Teacher Manual Analysis

To explore the factors that influence autonomy development of learners in English classes and the cultural factors of both countries, English textbooks and teachers' manual of third to sixth graders in Japan and the Netherlands were analyzed. According to Reinders and Balçikanli (2011), "textbooks are the most likely way in which learners will come into contact with ideas about autonomy," and "textbooks do have the potential to foster autonomy

in several ways even if the progression of learning is largely fixed” (p. 270). Therefore, when textbooks are used effectively to develop learner autonomy, they become useful tools to foster autonomy in a classroom. At the same time, however, Reinders and Balçikanli emphasized that teachers should choose appropriate materials that are well-suited to the learning context and the needs of the learners. Thus, teachers must think of effective means to use the textbooks, not merely follow the teacher manual.

Analysis of English textbooks and teacher manuals in Japan and the Netherlands was used to answer the second (In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?), fourth (How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?), and fifth (How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?) research questions. The rationale for conducting analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals to answer these research questions is that the context of the classroom and textbook contents might be related to each other in each country. For instance, Ayu (2020) insisted that textbooks are tools that English learners can learn not only linguistic aspects but also social and cultural aspects involved in learning the language. In other words, it is assumed that the content of English textbooks used in a country reflects its cultural background. Hence, the researcher of the present study examined how teachers use textbooks as tools to develop their students’ autonomy.

Reinders and Balçikanli (2011) stated that “course textbooks may include some deliberate focus on the learning process and encourage students to reflect on their progress and as such is likely to play an important potential role in the development of students’ independent learning skills” (p. 265). Therefore, by analyzing the English textbooks used in elementary schools in Japan and the Netherlands from the perspective of fostering learners’ autonomy, each country’s characteristics of perceiving or considering learner autonomy can be clarified.

The following subsections presents the instruments used, procedures made, and analyses of textbooks and teacher manuals in both countries.

3.2.3.1 Instruments

This subsection presents how English textbooks and teacher manuals are used in Japan and the Netherlands to develop learners’ autonomy. As an instrument to discuss autonomous learning with textbooks and teacher manuals, a checklist is necessary to indicate the autonomous learning process in English lessons in each country. The researcher created four checklists: (1) for learning stages in Japanese textbooks, (2) for learning stages in Dutch textbooks, (3) for learning stages in Japanese teacher manuals, and (4) for learning stages in Dutch teacher manuals (Appendix C). These checklists combined the three motivational

stages proposed by Reeve (2016) and eight stages in the development of learner autonomy suggested by Reinders (2010).

The three motivational stages proposed by Reeve (2016) are (1) prelesson reflection, (2) start of the lesson, (3) in-lesson. The eight stages advocated by Reinders (2010) are (1) identifying learning needs, (2) setting goals, (3) planning to learn, (4) selecting resources, (5) selecting strategies, (6) practicing, (7) monitoring progress, and (8) assessment and revision. These eight stages were used in the research by Reinders and Balçikanli (2011) on textbook analysis in the context of learner autonomy.

The researcher of the present study categorized the eight stages proposed by Reinders (2010) into three motivational stages of Reeve (2016) along with the flow of the lesson to clarify which part of the lesson each learning stage corresponds to, with two checkboxes (yes or no). These two tables compare textbooks and teacher manuals in Japan and the Netherlands.

To determine if these eight components are existent in textbooks and teacher manuals, the researcher used stages in the development of learner autonomy presented by Reinders (2010, p. 46). Table 7 presents the stages in the learner autonomy process of teacher-directed and learner-directed components advocated by Reinders. After the researcher checked each item of the textbook and the teacher manual using this stage chart, the judgment criteria were the presence or absence of learner-directed factors.

Table 7*Stages in the Development of Learner Autonomy (Reinders, 2010)*

Learning stages	Teacher-directed	Learner-directed
Identifying needs	Placement tests, and teacher feedback.	Learner experiences/difficulties in using the language.
Setting goals	Determined by the course, relatively flexible.	Contextually determined, relatively flexible.
Planning learning	Determined by the teacher, somewhat flexible.	Contextually determined, very flexible.
Selecting resources	Provided by the teacher.	Self-selection by learners.
Selecting learning strategies	Teacher models and instructions.	Self-selection by learners.
Practice	Exercises and activities provided by the teacher.	Implementation (language use) and experimentation.
Monitoring progress	Regular classroom feedback and comments on assignments and tasks.	Self-monitoring and/or peer feedback.
Assessment and revision	Tests, curriculum changes.	Self-assessment and/or reflection.

The following subsections describe which textbooks and teacher manuals were used in the analysis in Japan and the Netherlands, respectively. Reinders and Balçikanli (2011) included a column “Information or activity.” When they found aspects of learner autonomy at each stage, they noted its descriptions. Their research categorized information and activity based on whether the textbook provided only information about the importance of learning strategies or provided the students with any practical activities using these strategies. However, in the present study, the researcher described more specific information about each Yes item in the column “Information”.

3.2.3.1.1 Japanese Textbooks and Teacher Manuals

Since 2020, in Japanese elementary schools, Foreign Language Activities are mandatory in third and fourth grades, and Foreign Language is a mandatory subject in fifth

and sixth grades. In Japan, the textbooks *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* created by MEXT (2018b, 2018d) are used for third and fourth graders, respectively, along with their corresponding teachers' manuals.

Meanwhile, for textbooks and teacher manuals of fifth and sixth graders, after the full implementation of EFL subject in 2020, MEXT has notified that the fifth and sixth graders use the textbooks authorized by MEXT,¹¹ even though the textbook *We Can!*, which was created by MEXT, had been used at elementary schools nationwide during the transition period from 2018 to 2019 (MEXT, 2019) (*We Can! 1* and *We Can! 2* were used for fifth and sixth graders, respectively).

Herein, four Japanese English textbooks were analyzed from the perspective of developing learners' autonomy: *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* for third and fourth graders, respectively, both created by MEXT (2018b, 2018d), *New Horizon Elementary English Course 5* (hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon 5*) (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021a) and *New Horizon Elementary English Course 6* (hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon 6*) (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021c) for fifth and sixth graders, respectively. They are commonly used in elementary schools in Shimane Prefecture. The researcher works at three elementary schools as a JTE in Shimane Prefecture in 2023, and all three schools are using these textbooks. *Let's*

¹¹ There are seven elementary school English textbooks authorized by MEXT, and the information can be obtained from the following website of MEXT: https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/kyoukasho/tenji/1416494.htm

Try! 1 and *Let's Try! 2* consist of nine units each, and *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* consist of eight units each.

As for the teacher manual, MEXT has also created the corresponding teacher's guidebook for *Let's Try! 1* (MEXT, 2018c) and *Let's Try! 2* (MEXT, 2018e). The MEXT (2018f) website has authorized downloads of a teacher manual and lesson guide plans, with the following regulations:

Regarding students' booklets and teachers' guidebooks, it is prohibited to make them available to an unspecified number of people by reprinting them on other websites, reprinting them in publications without permission, and using them for commercial purposes. (MEXT, 2018f, author translation)

The teacher manuals *New Horizon Elementary English Course 5 Teacher's Guide, Guidance Edition* (hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon 5 TG*) (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021b) and *New Horizon Elementary English Course 6 Teachers' Guide, Guidance Edition* (hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon 6 TG*) (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021d) are available only for educators according to the publisher's, Tokyo Shoseki, website.¹² Furthermore, lesson plans are available for download, which were created based on the actual situation of teaching in Yokohama City.

¹² Here is the website of Tokyo Shoseki: <https://ten.tokyo-shoseki.co.jp/detail/113085/> Educators can refer to this website for information on how to obtain the teacher guidebooks.

3.2.3.1.2 Dutch Textbooks and Teacher Manuals

In the Netherlands, like Japan, various textbooks are used in English classes.

However, unlike Japan, there are no government-authorized textbooks by the Dutch OCW.

Each school can decide on the teaching method and choose complementary textbooks and teaching materials. Regarding this, Reints (2011) stated the following:

The National Information Centre on Textbooks¹³, which is an agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, gives on their website information about all textbooks concerning the context, (especially the curriculum coverage), the market supply, and some pedagogical-didactical features of the textbook. (p. 5)

As per the semi-structured interviews, the popular English textbooks used for third and fourth graders in the Netherlands are *Take it Easy* or *Groove Me*. The interviewed Dutch teachers provided the researcher with the contact information of the textbook publishers. In addition, the Dutch intermediary obtained the contact details of the publishers and surprisingly, *Blink*,¹⁴ which publishes *Groove Me*, offers the researcher 3 months of online access for the teaching materials. The researcher then contacted *Blink* directly and explained the research purpose to the person in charge of Primary Education Support. They permitted

¹³ Here is the website of the National Information Centre: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en>

¹⁴ According to the Education Support staff of Blink, they conducted a pilot at Japanese elementary schools several years ago. As a result, they were able to create a worksheet translated into Japanese, but they were not able to continue implementing it in Japanese elementary schools for some reason.

the researcher access to the teaching materials (online textbook *Groove Me*, students' worksheets, and teacher's handbook) for 3 months between July 2023 and September 2023.

Regarding English textbooks for fifth graders, the researcher requested the Japanese teacher in Amsterdam (as mentioned in Section 3.2.1.1.2) to send her pdf copies of the textbook *Alles-in-1: Project Europa*¹⁵ [All-in-1: Project Europe] (Alles-in-1, 2010a), which is widely used in Dutch elementary schools including the one the Japanese teacher works. According to the teacher, this textbook was designed so that students can study multiple subjects other than mathematics in accordance with the theme. Hence, as per the researcher's request, the teacher sent her the pages only related to fifth graders' English lessons relevant for the present study.

However, the Japanese teacher in Amsterdam was occupied with work; therefore, it was difficult for her to send the English subject parts and the teacher manual for other grades. Therefore, the researcher asked the Dutch intermediary to obtain and send the English lesson pages of *Alles-in-1: Project Moderne Geschiedenis*¹⁶ [All-in-1: Project Modern History] (Alles-in-1, 2010c) for sixth graders, the teacher manual of *Alles-in-1: Project Europa Handboek*¹⁷ [All-in-1: Project Europe Handbook] (hereinafter referred to as *All-in-1: Project Europe HB*) (Alles-in-1, 2010b) for the fifth graders, and the teacher manual of the *Alles-in-*

¹⁵ *Alles-in-1: Project Europa* is the original Dutch title of the textbook, but this study uses the English translation *All-in-1: Project Europe* for the convenience of readers.

¹⁶ *Alles-in-1: Project Moderne Geschiedenis* is the original Dutch title of the textbook, but this study uses the English translation *All-in-1: Project Modern History* for the convenience of readers.

¹⁷ *Alles-in-1: Project Europa Handboek* is the original Dutch title of the teacher's manual, but this study uses the English translation *All-in-1: Project Europe Handbook* for the convenience of readers.

*I: Project Moderne Geschiedenis Handboek*¹⁸[All-in-1: Project Modern History Handbook]

(hereinafter referred to as *All-in-1: Project Modern History HB*) (Alles-in-1, 2010d) for sixth graders.

Regarding the textbook for sixth graders and the teacher manuals for fifth and sixth graders, after several email exchanges between the Dutch intermediary and the textbook publishing company, the former obtained the original textbook and teacher manuals, which was sent to the researcher by airmail in April 2022.¹⁹ The textbooks and teacher manuals were written in Dutch; hence, the Dutch intermediary translated them into English as per the researcher's request. Fortunately, he works as a professional translator as well, so the quality of the translation was reliable, even though he used the AI-powered translation tool and then he reviewed whole pages carefully.

Groove Me for third and fourth graders consists of six songs (units), and *All-in-1* for fifth and sixth graders consists of five themes throughout the year. Moreover, in the Netherlands, the Dutch OCW does not produce teacher manuals. Meanwhile, according to the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE, 2020) in the Netherlands, even though the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO)²⁰ develops curricula and other materials for teachers and schools to utilize, it is vital to allow flexibility for schools to

¹⁸ *Alles-in-1: Project Moderne Geschiedenis Handboek* is the original Dutch title of the teacher's manual, but this study uses the English translation *All-in-1: Project Modern History Handbook* for the convenience of readers.

¹⁹ When this research was planned in 2019, the target grades were limited to fifth and sixth graders, so textbooks and teacher manuals for fifth- and sixth-grade students were obtained in 2022. Later, the research was expanded to include third and fourth graders, so textbooks and teacher manuals for third and fourth graders were obtained in 2023.

²⁰ Here is the website of SLO: <https://www.slo.nl/>

select and design curriculum and instruction by themselves. However, in this study, the researcher analyzed how guidance to support the autonomy of learners was found not only in textbooks but also in teacher manuals.

3.2.3.2 Analysis

The present study examined Japanese and Dutch English textbooks and teacher manuals (*Let's Try! 1*, *Let's Try! 2*, *New Horizon 5*, and *New Horizon 6* for the Japanese demographic and *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders, *All-in-1: Project Europe* for fifth graders, and *All-in-1: Project Modern History* for sixth graders for the Dutch demographic). The checklists for learning stages (Appendix C) were used for Japanese and Dutch textbooks and teacher manuals.

If each item of the eight learning stages (identifying needs, setting goals, planning to learn, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, practice, monitoring progress, and assessment and revision) on the checklist was found in the textbooks and teacher manuals, Yes was written or else, No. Furthermore, specific information from the textbooks and teacher manuals were written in the column "Information for each Yes item." In addition, any information that support the criteria from the interviews were written.

3.3 Conclusion of Chapter 3

In this chapter, to explore the answers to the five research questions related to teacher support for learner autonomy, the researcher described the research methods adopted in this study. They were mixed methods of quantitative (questionnaires to Japanese and Dutch teachers) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers and analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals) research.

Sixty-one participants each from the Japanese and Dutch demographic responded to the questionnaire, and 5 participants each from Japan and the Netherlands participated in the follow-up semi-structured interviews. These ten interviewees provided the researcher with specific definitions of learner autonomy, their implementations to foster learner autonomy in their English classes, obstacles in fostering learner autonomy, and cultural characteristics from their point of view.

For the 5-point Likert scale items of the questionnaire, the data were analyzed using reliability tests and confirmatory factor analysis and then MANOVA. In addition, owing to the poor scale fit of the results of confirmatory factor analysis on the Japanese demographic, multiple regression analysis of six aspects of learner autonomy was conducted. The data of open-ended questions of the questionnaire survey was analyzed using KH Coder and GTA through quantitative analysis. Moreover, M-GTA was used to qualitatively analyze the interview results.

In addition, textbooks and teacher manuals for third to sixth graders were analyzed to investigate the cultural influence on learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands, using a checklist that combined three motivational stages of Reeve (2016) and eight stages in the development of learner autonomy by Reinders (2010). The next chapter presents the results derived from these mixed methods.

Chapter 4: Results

To answer the five research questions regarding Japanese and Dutch teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy, the survey questionnaires were quantitatively analyzed. In addition, the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed to derive more concrete examples. Moreover, textbooks and teacher manuals in Japan and the Netherlands were analyzed from the viewpoint of promoting learner autonomy. The research questions were as follows:

1. What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
2. In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?
3. What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
4. How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
5. How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

The following subsections present the analytical results of the survey questionnaires with 5-point Likert scale questions and open-ended questions, the semi-structured interviews, and the textbook and teacher manual analysis.

4.1 Questionnaires to Japanese and Dutch Teachers

The survey questionnaires for Japanese and Dutch Teachers have three sections: (1) participants' personal information (Sects. 3.2.1.1.1 and 3.2.1.1.2 for Japanese and Dutch teachers, respectively), (2) 39 five-point Likert scale questions adapted from Admiraal et al. (2019), and (3) five open-ended questions (two were adapted from Admiraal et al. and three were created by the researcher).

4.1.1 Five-point Likert Scale Questions

The questionnaire survey was conducted to investigate the teachers' support for learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands. The survey items were categorized into six factors: freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence. There were 61 responses each from the Japanese and Dutch demographic. Afterward, the reliability test was conducted. Table 8 presents the frequentist scale reliability of Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses.

Table 8*Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics for Japanese and Dutch Teachers' Questionnaire**Responses*

	Japan (N = 61)	The Netherlands (N = 61)
Cronbach's α [95% CI]	.93 [.90, .95]	.83 [.75, .89]

The reliability of Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses to the questionnaire was presented via Cronbach's α (see Table 8). The Cronbach's α of .93 (95% CI [.90, .95]) and .83 (95% CI [.75, .89]) for the Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses were acceptable.

Next, the factor model was assessed using goodness-of-fit index ($GFI \geq .95$) (Hamada, 2020, p. 163), comparative fit index ($CFI \geq .95$), and root mean square error of approximation ($RMSEA \leq .05$) (Table 9).

Table 9*Model Fit Measures for Japanese and Dutch Teachers' Questionnaire Responses*

Japan			The Netherlands		
CFI	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	GFI
.61	.11	.56	1.00	.00	.99

On the Japanese demographic, $CFI = .61$, $RMSEA = .11$, and $GFI = .56$. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis on the Japanese demographic did not meet the goodness-of-fit measures. On the contrary, on the Dutch demographic, $CFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA < .001$, and $GFI = .99$. These statistics meet the requirements for confirmatory factor analysis. The lack of fit on the Japanese demographic indicated the importance of creating instruments to consider the population under investigation. The question items, after all, were adapted from

Admiraal et al. (2019) for the Dutch context. However, the Dutch demographic has the advantage of responding to the exact same English items as those by Admiraal et al. compared to Japanese-translated ones utilized by the Japanese demographic.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the Japanese demographic did not meet the goodness-of-fit measures, necessitating further analysis, which was confirmed according to the teachers' grade levels ($p = 0.13$), gender ($p = < .001$), and teaching experiences ($p = 0.69$) in Japan and the Netherlands, using the chi-squared test (see Table 10).

Table 10

Significant Differences Between Japanese and Dutch Teacher Attributes

	Japan		The Netherlands		<i>p</i> -value
	n (= 61)	%	n (= 61)	%	
Grade					.13
English teacher	6	9.8	0	0	
G3	16	26.2	14	23.0	
G4	14	23.0	15	24.6	
G5	11	18.0	14	23.0	
G6	14	23.0	18	30.0	
Gender					<.001
Male	34	55.7	10	16.4	
Female	26	42.6	51	84.6	
Prefer not to say	1	1.7	0	0	
Teaching experience					.69
1-5 years	40	65.6	36	59.0	
6-10 years	6	9.8	6	9.8	
11-15 years	7	11.5	6	9.8	
More than 16 years	8	13.1	13	21.4	

Afterward, a MANOVA was conducted to reveal the significance of each factor (freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, curiosity, independence, and problem-solving). However, before proceeding with the MANOVA, Japanese and Dutch teacher attributes needed to be obtained such as their grade levels managed, gender, and English teaching experience, indicating the p -value for each country. Table 11 presents the significant differences between Japan and the Netherlands ($p < .001$).

Table 11

The Results of MANOVA According to Nationality: Comparison of Japan and the Netherlands

Cases	df	F	Trace _{Pillai}	Num df	Den df	p -value
(Intercept)	1	1723.310	0.989	6	115.000	< .001
Nationality	1	13.320	0.410	6	115.000	< .001
Residuals	120					

Therefore, after conducting the questionnaire survey from the viewpoint of developing learners' autonomy, a significant difference in viewpoints was found between the Japanese and Dutch teachers.

However, it is not clear which factors of the Japanese and Dutch teachers vary; hence, a multiple regression analysis was conducted for each aspect between the Japanese and Dutch teachers: *Freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence*. Nevertheless, since the ratio of the number of respondents by gender was

different between Japan and the Netherlands, multiple regression analysis was performed after adjusting for gender using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 12 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis of Admiraal et al.'s (2019) six aspects of learner autonomy. It was conducted to examine the results of Dutch teachers based on the responses of Japanese teachers.

Table 12

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Six Aspects of Learner Autonomy: Coefficients of Dutch Teachers Based on Japanese Teachers

(Ref.: Japan)	Aspects of Learner Autonomy	Unstandardized (<i>b</i>)	t	<i>p</i> -value
	Freedom of choice	0.831	6.917	< .001
	Self-insight	0.912	6.124	< .001
	Self-expression	0.339	2.736	0.007
	Problem-solving	0.260	2.707	0.008
	Curiosity	0.159	1.255	0.212
	Independence	0.035	0.372	0.711

As shown in Table 12, self-insight has the largest score difference between Japan and the Netherlands followed by freedom of choice ($b = 0.912$ and $b = 0.831$, respectively). These are followed by self-expression and problem-solving. The p -values of these four aspects are lower than the p -value (0.0083) calculated by adjusting with the Bonferroni correction; hence, this indicates a significant difference.

On the contrary, regarding curiosity and independence, the score difference between Japan and the Netherlands is smaller than the other four aspects (0.159 for curiosity and

0.035 for independence), and both p -values exceeded 0.0083 (0.212 for curiosity and 0.711 for independence); hence, there is no significant difference between the two countries for these two aspects.

In addition to the quantitative analysis of this questionnaire, the responses of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were qualitatively mined. Furthermore, the results of the semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed to support the results of the quantitative research.

4.1.2 Open-ended Questions

The questionnaire also contains five open-ended questions that were designed to elicit responses to answer each research question, as shown in Table 13.

The frequency of the written phrases in the questionnaire was presented using a cooccurrence network diagram of the KH Coder. The researcher translated the Japanese teachers' responses into English, and the quality of the translations was confirmed by a bilingual Japanese and English teacher.

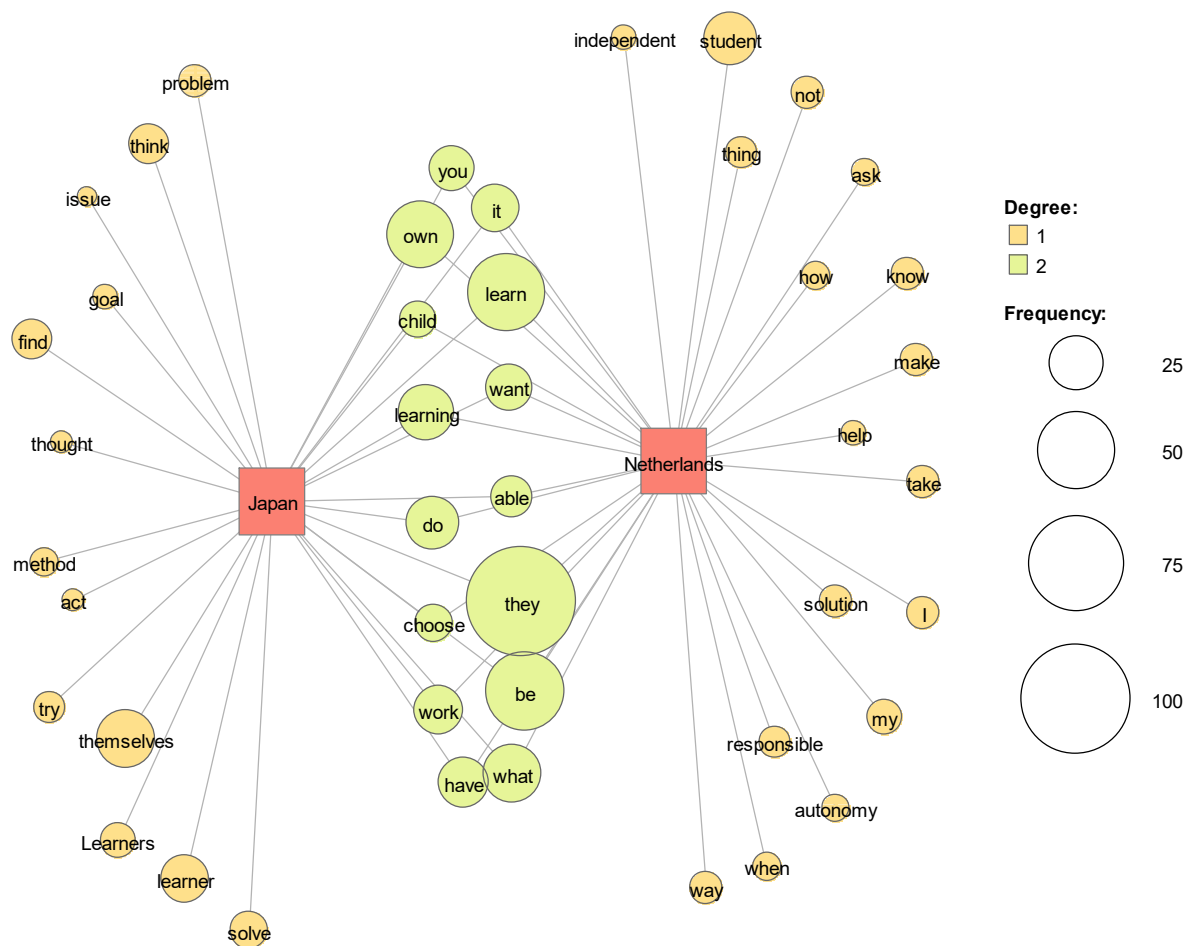
Table 13*Open-Ended Questions (OEQs) to Japanese and Dutch Teachers for Each Research Question*

Research Questions	OEQs to Japanese teachers	OEQs to Dutch teachers
1: What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	「学習者の自律性」をどのように定義しますか。	How would you define learner autonomy?
2: In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?	ご回答者様は、児童の自律性をどのように促進しようと努めていますか。	In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
3: What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	理想的な状況下で、児童の自律性を促進するとしたら何をしたいですか。	In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?
4: How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	児童が自律的に学習することが妨げられているとすれば、原因は何だと思いますか。	What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
5: How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?	ご回答者様のクラスで児童の自律性育成のために実施されていることで、日本独自だと思われることがありますか？	Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?

Figure 10 presents the responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers to the first open-ended question (How would you define learner autonomy?). Of the 122 respondents from Japan and the Netherlands, unambiguous responses were 57 and 59 (93.4% and 96.7%), respectively. Although not shown in Figure 10, four teachers from the Japanese demographic and two teachers from the Dutch demographic responded “I don’t know” or “I’m not sure” to the first question. Therefore, 6.6% and 3.3% of Japanese and Dutch teachers, respectively, teach English without having a clear understanding of learner autonomy.

Figure 10

Cooccurrence Network for the Teachers' Definitions of Learner Autonomy



The frequency of words is based on four levels (100, 75, 50, and 25). The circles that intersect in center of the diagram are the common words from both countries. As shown in the diagram, “they” appears the most (“they” represents students). Moreover, own, learn, learning, you, child, and want appear frequently, which are followed by able, choose, be, what, work, and have.

In the Japanese demographic, instances of the words presented in Figure 10 were extracted in the following: “To be able to have your own thoughts and ideas for the task, not

limited to right and wrong answers. Also, to work to have those thoughts and ideas” (Grade 4 Japanese female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). “[Children] think for themselves, choose the best method, and practice” (Grade 6 Japanese male teacher, with 6–10 years of teaching experience). “The children can explore what they want to learn” (Grade 5 Japanese male teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

On the contrary, Dutch teachers stated the following: “When pupils choose their own work, time, and place” (Grade 6 Dutch male teacher, with more than 16 years of teaching experience). “To be able to find answers themselves” (Grade 3 Dutch female teacher, with more than 16 years of teaching experience). “Learner autonomy is about making your own decisions according to the learning progress. Being able to do things yourself. The trust you have in doing the task successfully” (Grade 6 Dutch female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

The following words were frequently expressed by the Japanese participants: themselves, problem, think, find, learner(s), issue, goal, method, try, and solve. One of the Japanese teachers answered as follows: “The ability to find ways to solve problems on their own and actually solve them” (Grade 6 Japanese male teacher, with 11–15 years of teaching experience).

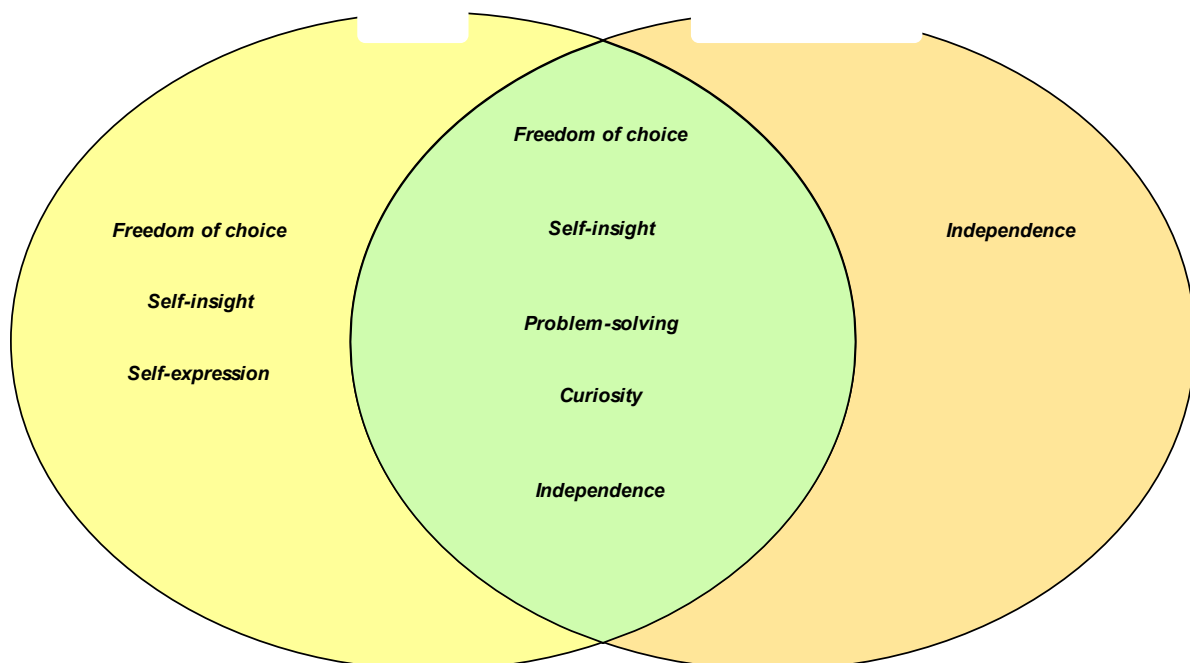
On the contrary, the Dutch teachers mentioned the words independent and responsible, which are not mentioned by the Japanese teachers. For instance, one of the

teachers mentioned as follows: “Learner autonomy is when students take control and are responsible for their own learning” (Grade 5 Dutch female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experiences). “As an inquisitive, independent learner” (Grade 5 Dutch female teacher, with 6–10 years of teaching experience).

Figure 11 presents the results of the GTA. The unambiguous responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers were conceptualized and then categorized into six aspects adapted from Admiraal et al.’s (2019) questionnaire. The concepts that belong to each category were determined as per Admiraal et al.’s questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Figure 11

Comparison of the Teachers’ Definitions of Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category.

The converged area consists the common categories between Japanese and Dutch teachers, the left side consists categories found only in Japanese teachers, and the right side consists categories found only in Dutch teachers.

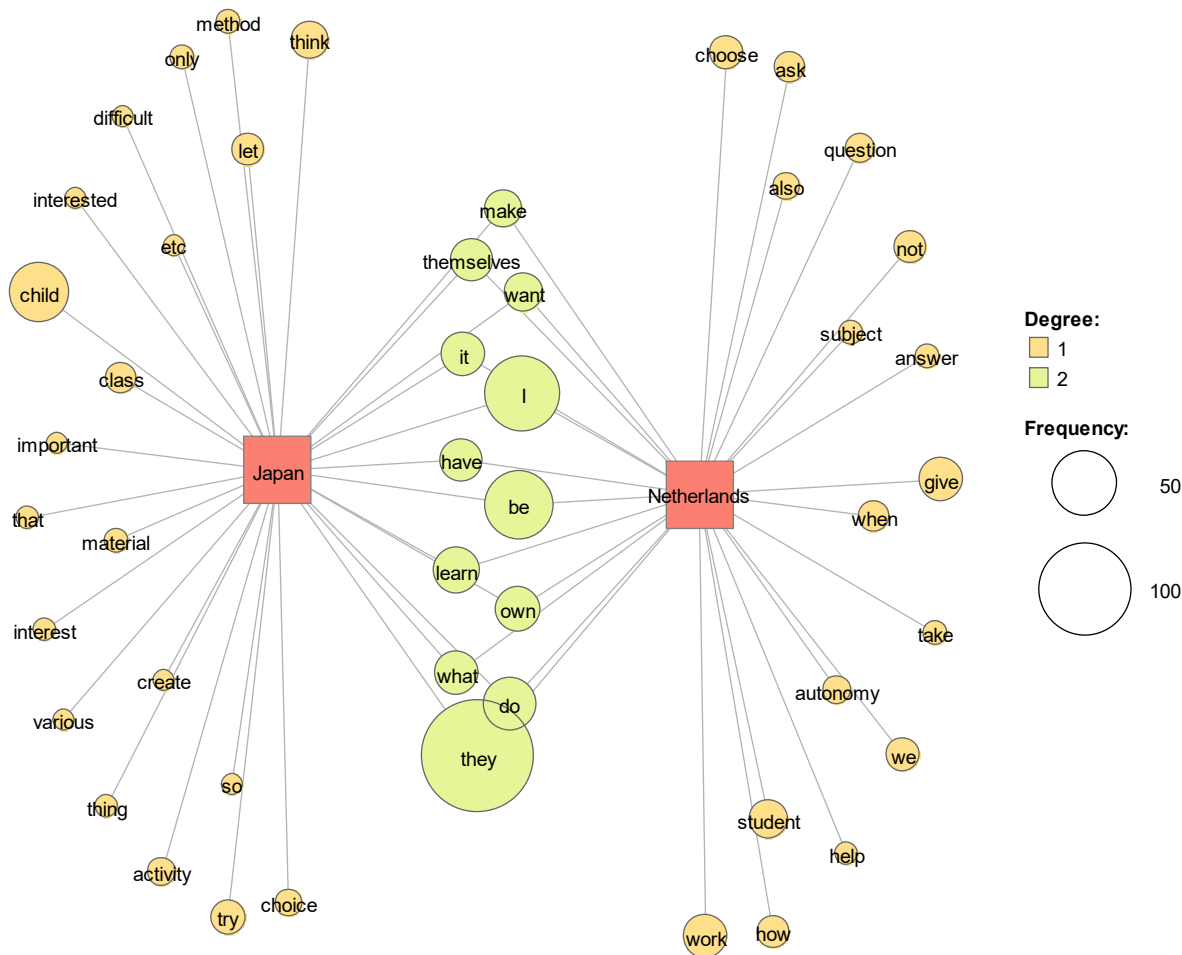
Regarding the categories, freedom of choice has three concepts, namely, setting learning goals and choosing learning strategies in the converged area and planning one's learning on the Japanese side. Self-insight has three concepts, namely, self-regulation and self-monitoring in the converged area and grasping the lesson flow on the Japanese side. Self-expression has one concept, i.e., expressing one's opinions, on the Japanese side. Problem-solving has one concept, i.e., self-problem-solving skills, on the converged area. Curiosity consists two concepts, namely, exploring what to learn and having the willingness to learn, in the converged area. Finally, independence has three concepts, namely, achieving a goal by oneself and independent learning in the converged area and students' responsibility in learning on the Dutch side. Therefore, all the six aspects related to learner autonomy used in Admiraal et al.'s (2019) questionnaire fit into the concept of the definition of learner autonomy by Japanese and Dutch teachers. However, self-expression was only seen on the Japanese side.

Next, responses to the question about how teachers in both countries support the development of learner autonomy are presented. Figure 12 presents the cooccurrence network of Japanese and Dutch teachers' responses to the question: "In what ways do you try to

promote the autonomy of the students in your class?” Of the 61 participants each from Japan and the Netherlands, unambiguous responses were 57 (93.4%) and 60 (98.4%), respectively. Four Japanese teachers and one Dutch teacher responded “I don’t know.” Therefore, these teachers do not focus on fostering learner autonomy during their English lessons.

Figure 12

Cooccurrence Network for the Ways of Promoting Learner Autonomy



The word frequency has two levels (100 and 50). The word “they” (which represents students) appeared the most, followed by “I” (the teacher). Other words such as be, learn, make, themselves, want, have, learn, own, what, and do appeared less than “they” and “I” in

the converged area. One of the Japanese male teachers mentioned what he implements in his English lessons as follows: “Let them think about what they want to do and make their own choices” (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). “It is difficult for [children] to do it by themselves, so I start by letting them choose freely from several options” stated (Grade 6 Japanese female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). On the contrary, one of the Dutch female teachers stated the following:

I work with different forms of learning. I always try to incorporate the students and their ideas. My students have a lot of influence in the classroom, like what they want to learn and their goals. My students work with a personal planner and a planner on the whiteboard in front of the class. My students choose if they want to learn alone or in pairs and what they want to learn. They can also choose if they follow the instructions. We work with portfolios. (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience)

Therefore, this Dutch teacher allows her students to set goals, plan learning, and choose learning strategies.

On the Japanese demographic, various words with low frequency are seen other than “child” such as think, let, method, only, difficult, interested, class, important, material, create, activity, try, and choice. The following are excerpts from two teachers’ responses: “I strive to create an atmosphere where it’s okay to fail and incorporate activities that arouse children’s

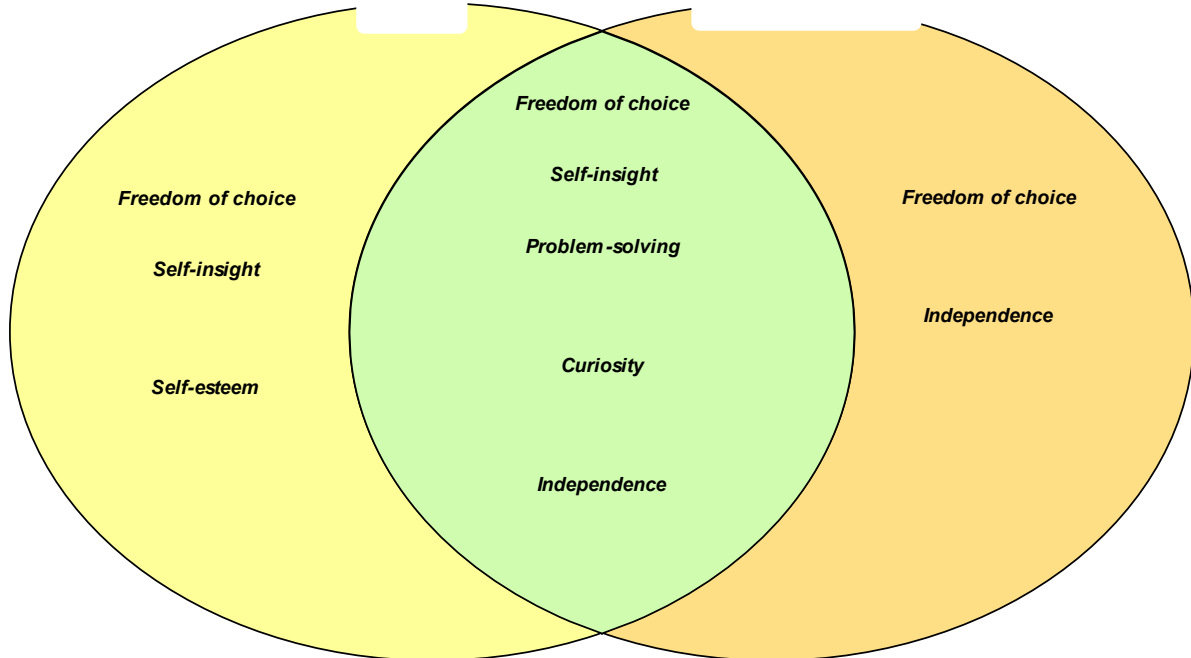
interest, even if only a little, so that children will want to try them” (Grade 3, Japanese female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). “I try to make [children] think about what they are interested in themselves by giving them something to be interested in” (Grade 5, Japanese male teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

On the Dutch demographic, words such as choose, ask, question, answer, give, how, autonomy, student, work, and help were mentioned. These words were used by the following respondents: “I give them freedom in how they can work together as a group and how they want to take notes (if any). Also in the way they want to prioritize certain tasks” (Grade 6 Dutch male teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). “The tasks that they can choose to do. The places where they can learn. The way that they plan their work during the day” (Grade 6 Dutch male teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

Moreover, Figure 13 presents the categories and concepts found through the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. Among the six aspects of learner autonomy, five of them were used in Admiraal et al.’s (2019) questionnaire (freedom of choice, self-insight, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence), and the other one, i.e., self-esteem, was found in the Japanese teachers’ responses. They were based on the unambiguous responses from the Japanese and Dutch teachers. Only the self-expression of Admiraal et al.’s did not appear.

Figure 13

Comparison of the Ways of Promoting Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category.

The category freedom of choice has five concepts, namely, selecting learning strategies in the converged area, free-paced learning on the Japanese demographic, and level-appropriate learning, setting goals by students, and planning learning on the Dutch demographic. The category self-insight had four concepts, namely, discussion in class in the converged area and presenting a lesson flow, self-reflection, and self-study assignment on the Japanese demographic. The category problem-solving has three concepts, namely, peer cooperation, allows students to make mistakes, and self-problem solving in the converged area. The category curiosity has four concepts, namely, enhancing students' curiosity, arousing students' interests, and developing teaching materials in the converged area. The

category self-esteem only had one concept, that is, praising students, on the Japanese demographic. The category independent had two concepts, namely, independent learning in the converged area and self-responsible learning on the Dutch demographic.

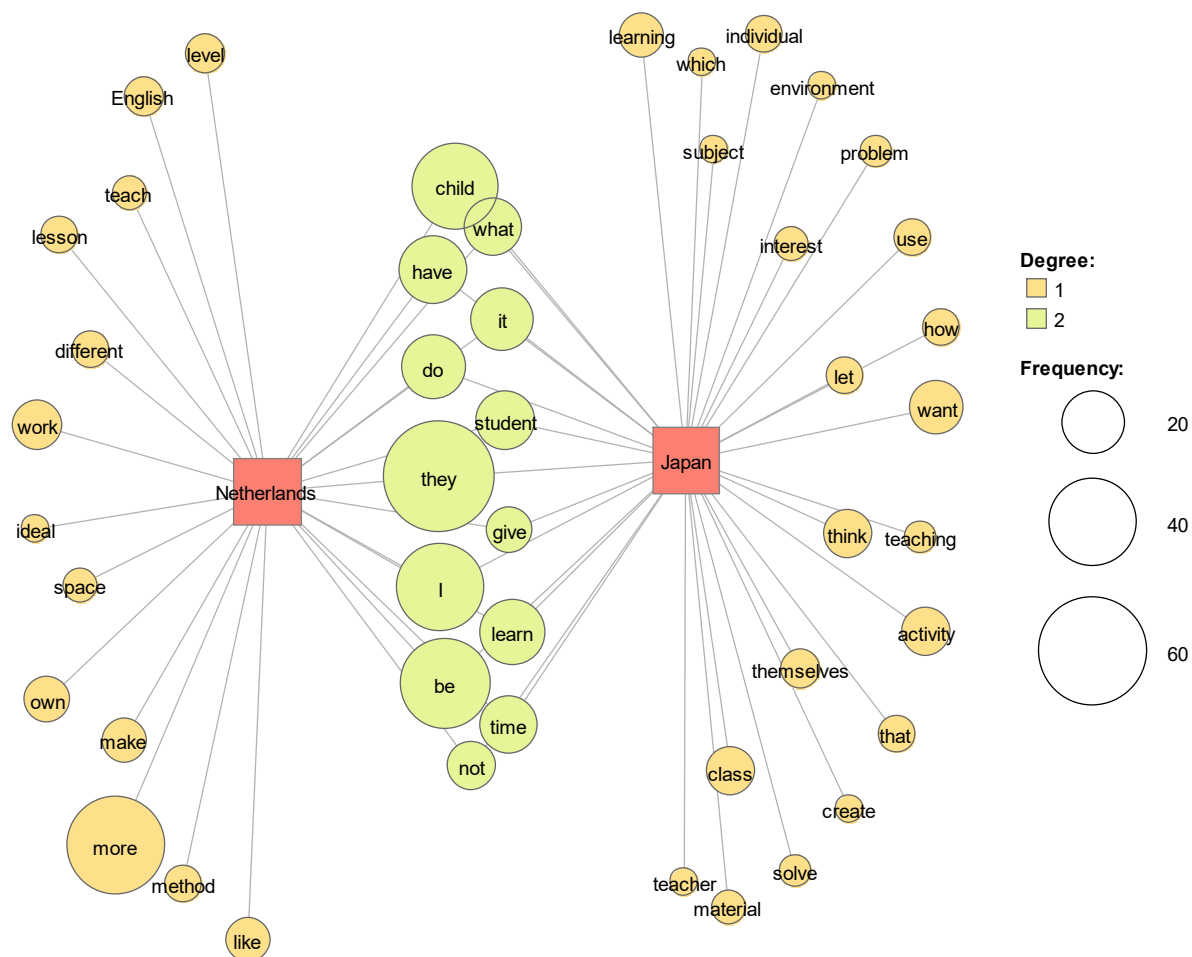
The five categories were found in the common area. In addition, the Japanese demographic had three concepts under the categories self-insight and self-esteem, which were not seen on the Dutch demographic. Moreover, the Dutch demographic had two more concepts in the category of *freedom of choice* than the Japanese.

Figure 14 presents the responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers to the third open-ended question (In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?) Of the 61 respondents each from Japan and the Netherlands, unambiguous responses were both 57 (93.4%). The other four teachers responded “I have no idea.” Therefore, about 7% of Japanese and Dutch teachers do not conduct English lessons that consider the ideal support for learner autonomy.

Regarding the frequency of words, three levels (60, 40, and 20) were indicated. The most frequent words mentioned by the Japanese and Dutch respondents, in the converged area, are as follows: they (represents students), I (represents the teacher), child, and be. These are followed by have, what, it, learn, student, do, give, time, and not.

Figure 14

Cooccurrence Network for the Ideal Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy



One of the Japanese male teachers stated, “Give the children 45 minutes to decide on an activity and have them carry it out on the condition that all the children in the class participate” (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Japanese male teacher responded, “As much as possible, I encourage children to do things on their own” (Grade 6, with 11–15 years of teaching experience).

However, one of the Dutch female teachers expressed the following:

Now it's always busy and I feel stressed out because there's limited time to have important conversations with my students. The ideal situation is that I have more time to support the autonomy of my students by taking the time for those important talks.

(Grade 4, more than 16 years of teaching experience)

Another Dutch male teacher claimed, "More time for them to explore their own interests"

(Grade 6, with 11–15 years of teaching experience).

Regarding the frequency of words in the Japanese demographic, various words with low frequency were observed such as learning, want, activity, class, individual, themselves, think, environment, interest, material, and create. A Japanese English male teacher with more than 16 years of teaching experience mentioned "I want to give my students as much individual support as possible." Another Japanese English male teacher with 1–5 years of teaching experience stated "Create an environment where all children can smile and enjoy participating in class. Creating lessons that reflect the opinions of each person." Furthermore, a Japanese female teacher mentioned what she hoped to do: "Teaching material development" (Grade 6, with more than 16 years of teaching experience).

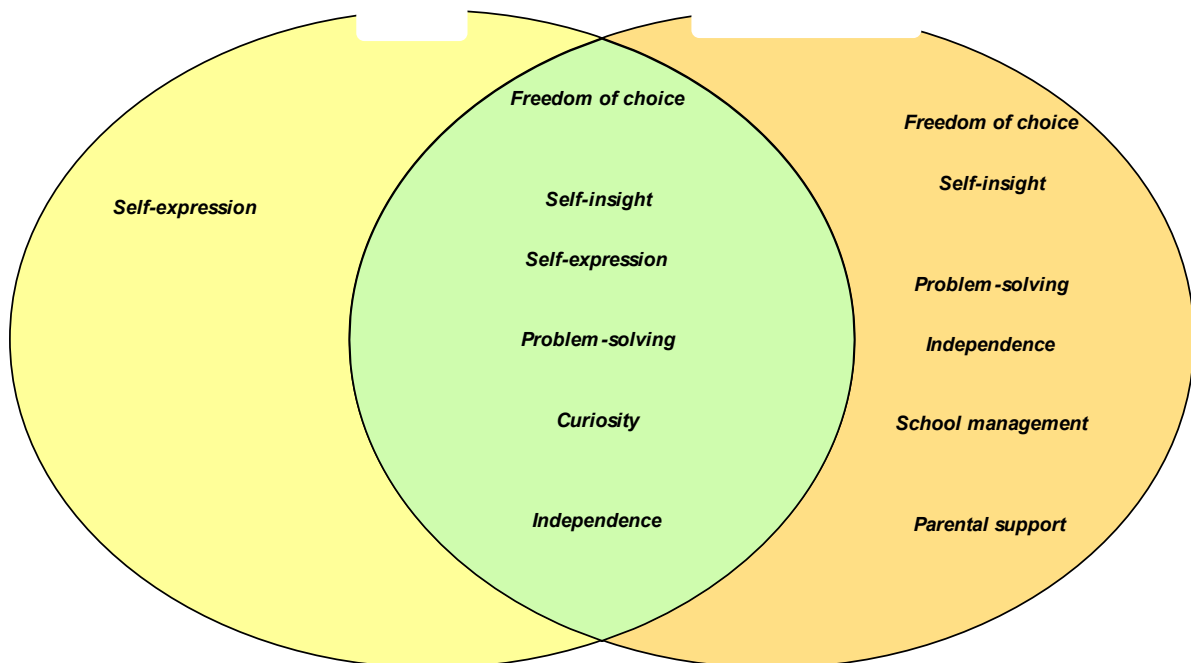
As for the Dutch demographic, "more" is seen the most frequently, followed by English, lesson, work, make, method, level, teach, different, and space. A Dutch male teacher responded, "Give more space for the students to come up with their own goals" (Grade 6, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Dutch female teacher mentioned, "I would

like to work with a method that makes it possible to work on your own level. Or working integrated with the themes” (Grade 6, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

Furthermore, Figure 15 presents the comparison of concepts between Japanese and Dutch teachers’ responses to the following question: “In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently to promote the autonomy of your students?” A total of 29 concepts were found and categorized into six aspects (freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence) used in the Admiraal et al.’s (2019) questionnaire.

Figure 15

Comparison of the Ideal Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category.

There are 14 common concepts between Japan and the Netherlands belonging to 6 categories. Japan had two categories and two concepts for each category. On the contrary, the Netherlands had 6 categories and 11 concepts. Moreover, four concepts did not fit into Admiraal et al.'s (2019) category. Therefore, three of them were categorized as school management and one was categorized as parental support.

The category freedom of choice had four concepts, namely, setting goals by students, level-appropriate learning, and planning learning by students in the converged area and providing freedom in learning on the Dutch demographic. In addition, the category self-insight had four concepts, namely, individual support in the converged area and dialogue with students, self-insight, and timely teachers' feedback on the Dutch demographic. The category self-expression had four concepts, namely, speech activity and promoting the use of practical English in the converged area and English-only class and interacting with foreigners on the Japanese demographic.

The category problem-solving had five concepts, namely, self-problem solving and mixed-age group learning in the converged area, discussion in class and working together with students on the Japanese demographic, and work as a facilitator/coach on the Dutch demographic. The concept mixed-age group learning was categorized into problem-solving rather than school management because it could be the teacher's intention to solve problems

by having children communicate to and assist each other, especially the older students helping the younger ones.

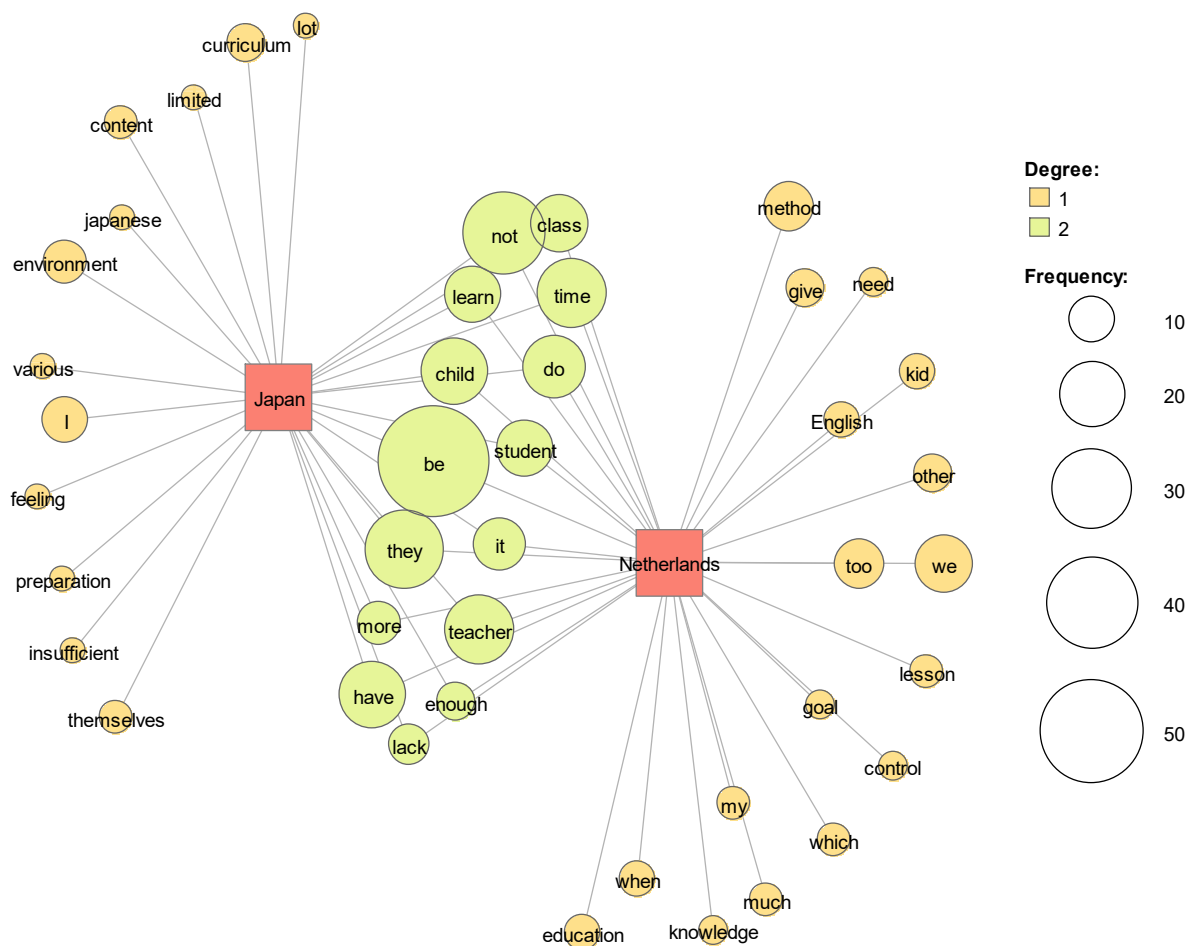
The category curiosity had three concepts in the converged area: developing teaching materials, utilizing various resources, and enhancing student interests. The category independence had five concepts, namely, personalized learning content, less teacher intervention, and research project in the converged area and independent learning and better learning environment on the Dutch demographic.

The category school management had three concepts, namely, early English education, small-sized class, and more frequent English lessons on the Dutch demographic. In addition, parental support was another category created to fit the concept of parental support at home.

Figure 16 presents the responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers to the following question: “What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?” Of the 61 respondents each from Japan and the Netherlands, unambiguous responses were 59 and 60 (96.7% and 98.4%, respectively). Two Japanese teachers and one Dutch teacher responded with “I have no idea.” Therefore, 3.3% of Japanese teachers and 1.6% of Dutch teachers were unaware of the factors that impede autonomy.

Figure 16

Cooccurrence Network for the Hindering Factors to Learner Autonomy



The frequency of words is indicated on five levels (50, 40, 30, 20, and 10). The most common words mentioned by the Japanese and Dutch teachers were as follows: be, not, class, time, learn, child, do, student, they, teacher, and have, followed by more, enough, and lack.

A Japanese male teacher responded, “It is a passive class with all classes. In order to overcome this, teachers must improve their competence, but they do not have the time or facilities to do so” (Grade 6, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Additionally, a Japanese female teacher responded, “There is not enough time to prepare for classes and the time for

classes itself, and teachers are constantly being pressed” (Grade 6, with more than 16 years of teaching experience). On the contrary, one Dutch female teacher responded, “There are too many things that my students have to do, because the curriculum and the teachers think they’re important, so students have less time to work on their own goals” (Grade 4, with more than 16 years of teaching experience), and another Dutch male teacher responded, “A lack of direction and goals” (Grade 3, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

On the Japanese demographic, the following words were mentioned only once or less frequently: I, curriculum, limited, content, environment, various, learning, themselves, preparation, and insufficient. Some of these words are shown in the following responses of Japanese teachers. A Japanese male teacher mentioned, “All learning content is predetermined, and [children] cannot choose for themselves” (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Japanese male teacher mentioned an obstacle to learner autonomy, “Insufficient skills of teachers” (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Furthermore, one Japanese male teacher states, “Because the curriculum is determined by the textbook” as a cause of hindrance to developing learner autonomy (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

On the contrary, on the Dutch demographic, the frequent words were as follows: we, method, and too, followed by English, control, education, knowledge, goal, lesson, give, and need. These words were extracted from the following responses of Dutch teachers. “In the

method we use, we want to have a different method, even more individual for the children” (Grade 5 Dutch female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Dutch male teacher stated, “The method is completely teacher-dependent” (Grade 6, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Dutch female teacher responded as follows:

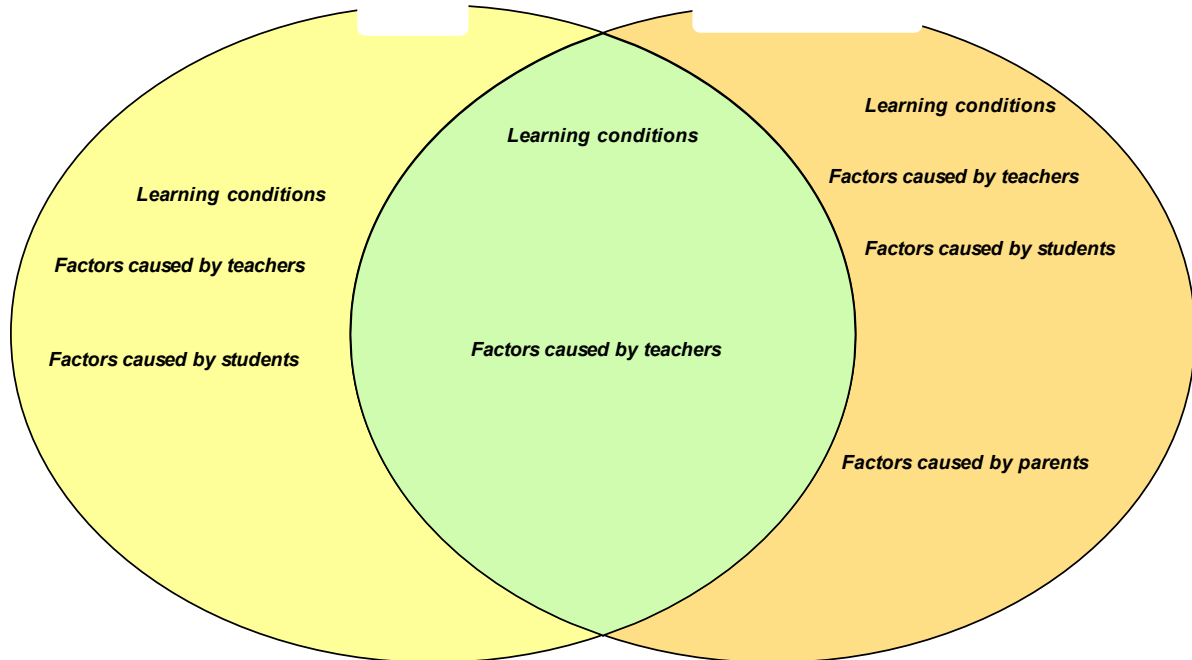
Our learning methods decide most of our behavior as teachers when it comes to giving students autonomy. It is when we design our own lessons that we have the possibility to give more freedom to our students. Sadly, we don’t have much time for this which means we should alter existing lessons. (Grade 4, 1 to 5 teaching experience)

Thus, Dutch teachers are currently facing the dilemma of being in an environment where they cannot provide lessons that foster students’ autonomy even though they want to.

Figure 17 presents the obstacles that hinder the development of learner autonomy as mentioned by the Japanese and Dutch teachers. A total of nine categories were found: three from Japan, four from the Netherlands, and two from both. In addition, a total of 29 concepts were categorized. The two categories found from both Japan and the Netherlands were learning conditions and factors caused by teachers. Seven and five concepts were categorized in learning conditions and factors caused by teachers, respectively.

Figure 17

Comparison of the Hindering Factors to Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category.

The Japanese demographic had three categories: learning conditions, factors caused by teachers, and factors caused by students. Learning conditions had one concept, factors caused by teachers had two concepts, and factors caused by students had four concepts. On the contrary, the Dutch demographic had the same three categories; however, they had one more, that is, factors caused by parents. On the Dutch demographic, learning conditions and factors caused by teachers had one concept each, factors caused by students had six concepts, and factors caused by parents had two concepts. Therefore, the Japanese demographic had seven concepts under three categories, while the Dutch demographic has ten concepts under four categories.

Regarding factors caused by students, low motivation in learning on the Japanese side and lazy attitude toward learning on the Dutch side were recognized as different concepts because not all unmotivated students show lazy behavior during class. For instance, Japanese students tend to follow the teacher's instructions and study or pretend to study, even if they are not motivated or are thinking about other things.

Next, Figure 18 presents the responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers to the fifth question ("Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country to foster learner autonomy?"). Of the 61 respondents each from Japan and the Netherlands, unambiguous responses were 23 (37.7%) and 28 (45.9%), respectively. In other words, 62.3% and 54.1% of Japanese and Dutch teachers, respectively, responded "I don't know" or "I have no idea." That means more than half of the teachers in either country have never considered fostering learner autonomy in relation to their own culture.

experience). Both teachers' responses included the word child; however, the contents were completely different.

The following words were only mentioned by the teachers in the Japanese demographic: activity, class, group, education, answer, individual, engagement, and language. "The number of study groups is large" (Grade 3 Japanese female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). "Students work collaboratively in groups" (Grade 3 Japanese female teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

Moreover, a Japanese male teacher mentioned "teacher-led classes" (Grade 5, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Another Japanese female teacher mentioned "try to focus on one answer" (Grade 3, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Furthermore, another Japanese female teacher mentioned "an engagement activity (*kakari katsudo*)" (Grade 3, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). In addition, "sports day" and "school lunch duty (*kyushoku toban*)" were mentioned; however, they did not appear on the KH Coder owing to their lower frequency, even though these were not related to English classes but seemed to foster learner autonomy.

On the Dutch demographic, apart from we and they, the words student, school, give, level, learn, teacher, and more are less frequently mentioned. These words were extracted from the following responses of Dutch teachers. "The teacher is still 'the boss' so to speak, but it's less hierarchical. We carry a shared responsibility for the process" (Grade 6 Dutch

female teacher, with more than 16 years of teaching experience). “Maybe there is more room for a dialogue between teacher and pupil” (Grade 6 Dutch male teacher, with 1–5 years of teaching experience). Furthermore, one of the Dutch male teachers responded as follows:

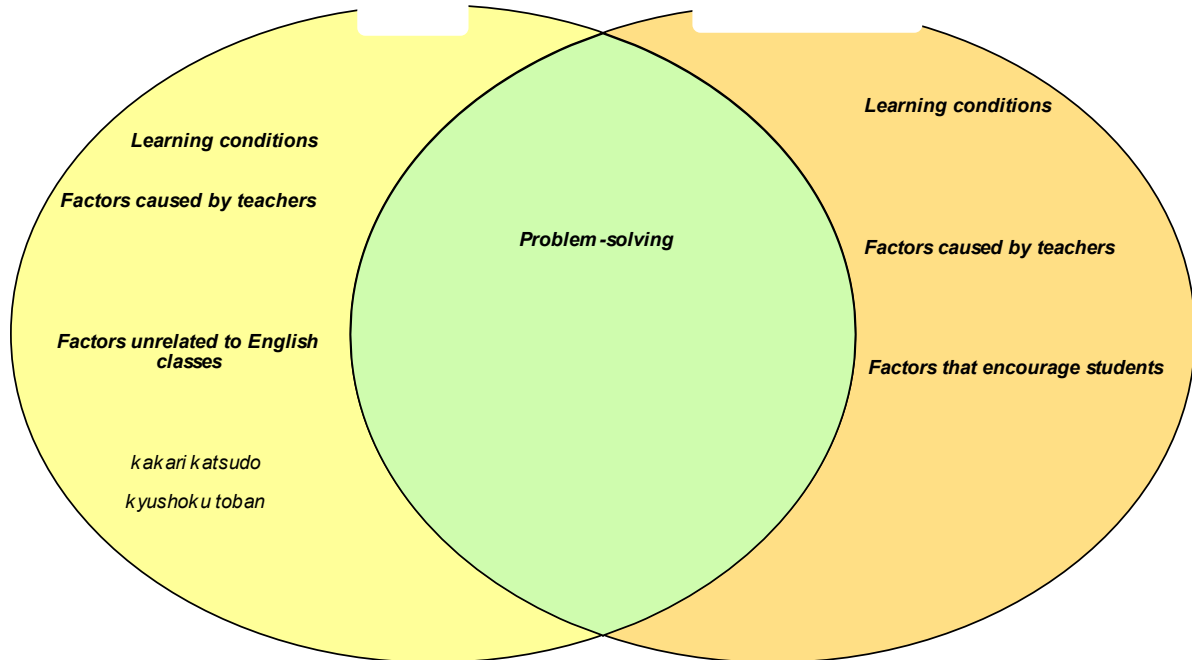
We have no schedule planned out for each day. We just have certain things that we require of the kids at the end of a period. During the period they can work on them and show us that they learned it and can apply it. When done at a good enough level they can check it off. (Grade 4, 1 to 5 years of teaching experience)

In addition, one Dutch female teacher stated “I teach in projects without books” (Grade 6, with more than 16 years of teaching experience). Regarding places to study, another Dutch female teacher responded as follows: “In my classroom, they don’t have fixed seats. They get to choose whether they sit on the couch, at a table, or on the ground as long as they get to learn” (Grade 4, with 1–5 years of teaching experience).

Figure 19 presents the categorized and conceptualized unambiguous responses of Japanese and Dutch teachers. Problem-solving was the only category in the converged area. The Japanese and Dutch demographic had three categories each, in which two were the same: learning conditions and factors caused by teachers. They just differ on the third category, that is, factors unrelated to English classes for the Japanese demographic and factors that encourage students for the Dutch demographic.

Figure 19

Comparison of the Cultural Influences on Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category.

There were a total of 28 concepts under 7 categories. The only common concept between Japan and the Netherlands was collaborative group work under the category problem-solving, remaining 12 and 15 concepts were on the Japanese and Dutch demographic, respectively). Learning conditions had one and four concepts on the Japanese and Dutch demographic, respectively. Moreover, factors caused by teachers had five and three concepts on the Japanese and Dutch demographic, respectively. Furthermore, as for the different categories between Japan and the Netherlands, factors unrelated to English classes had six concepts, and factors that encourage students had eight concepts.

As for the concept freedom to choose where to study, DT 3 who participated in the semi-structured interview via Zoom provided some photographs of students working on their assignments wherever they were allowed (see Figure 22 in Section 4.2.2). Therefore, the Dutch teacher's response to the questionnaire was more credible. The next section presents the results of the semi-structured interviews.

4.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Japanese and Dutch Teachers

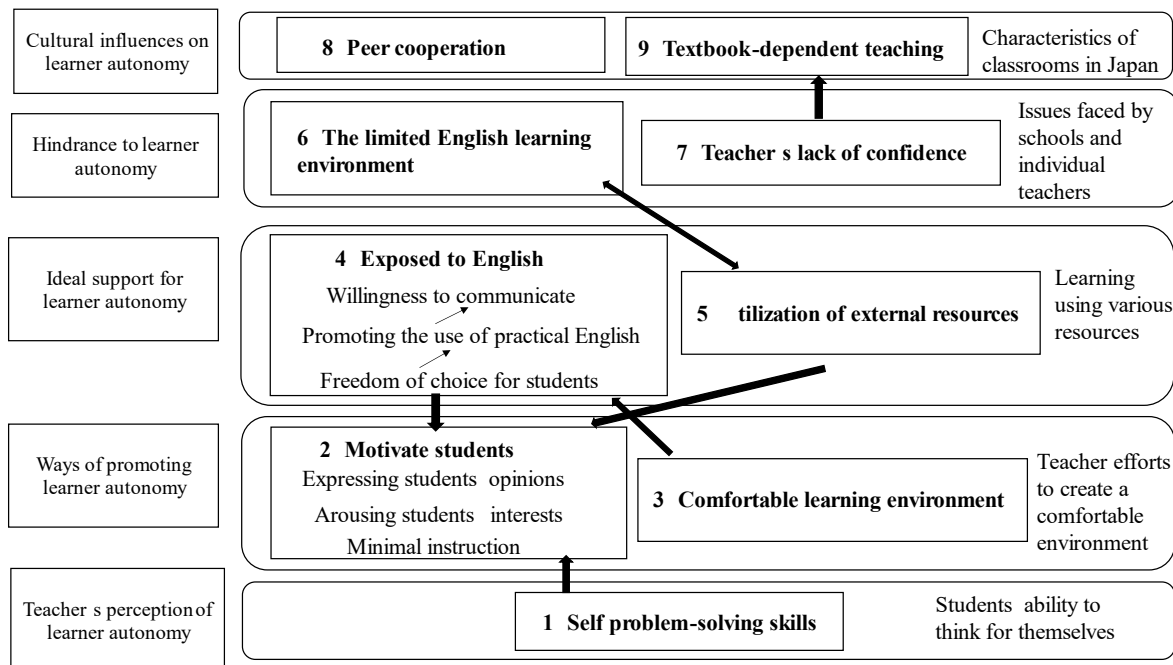
The results of the semi-structured interviews with the five Japanese and five Dutch teachers were analyzed using M-GTA. The researcher then divided the responses of the five research questions by variation and discovered the concepts. Japan and the Netherlands had 13 concepts on worksheets (see Appendix D for Japanese teachers and Appendix E for Dutch teachers). These concepts were categorized into nine and eight categories for the Japanese and Dutch demographic, respectively.

4.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews with Japanese Teachers

The results of the face-to-face semi-structured interviews with Japanese teachers are then presented (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Result of the Modified Grounded Theory Approach on the Japanese Side



As for the perception of learner autonomy, Japanese teachers recognize it as (1) *self-problem-solving skills*, which means learner autonomy is students' ability to think for themselves. Based on this perception, they attempt to (2) *motivate students* with the concepts of expressing students' opinions, arousing students' interest, and minimal instruction by teachers. Meanwhile, Japanese teachers attempt to create a (3) *comfortable learning environment*, considering fixed lesson structure and ensuring student mental safety. These factors can motivate students and make them (4) *exposed to English* as ideal support for learner autonomy. It includes the concept of freedom of choice for students, which leads to the concepts of promoting the use of practical English and willingness to communicate.

JT 1, a male teacher with 1 year of teaching experience, mentioned the importance of fixing the lesson structure to accommodate learner autonomy, "...when it comes to creating structure in class, which is also related to the lesson overview, I think that the children will be confused if the overview is extremely different from the usual class structure." Meanwhile, JT 4, a female teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, responded, "Japanese [schools] tend to let children fit into a 'mold' while they study. Well, that may be a good aspect, but I thought it was different from other countries."

Another category of ideal support is (5) *utilization of external resources*, which includes the utilization of human resources and learning from other classrooms. Teachers responded that these two factors motivate students and at the same time provide a (3) *comfortable learning environment* that made them (4) *exposed to English*.

However, the following two categories hinder learner autonomy: (6) *the limited English learning environment* issues and (7) *teacher's lack of confidence*. Of note, (5) *utilization of external resources* is interrelated with (6) *limited English environment*.

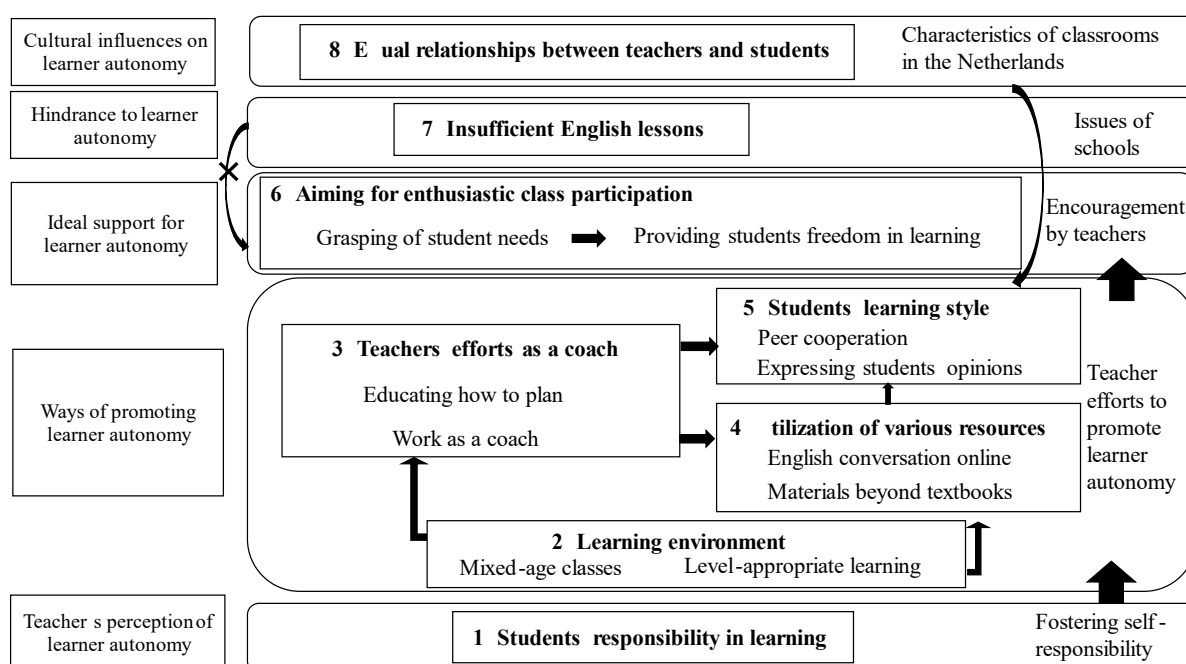
Regarding cultural influences on learner autonomy, two categories are indicated: (8) *peer cooperation* and (9) *textbook-based classes*. In Japan, peer cooperation is encouraging each other and working together in group activities. Teachers believed that it motivates students. However, textbook-dependent teaching correlates with the problems faced by teachers previously mentioned.

4.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Dutch Teachers

The results of semi-structured interviews with Dutch teachers via Zoom were analyzed by M-GTA and compared with the Japanese teachers' result (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Result of the Modified Grounded Theory Approach on the Dutch Side



The Dutch teachers perceived learner autonomy as (1) *students' responsibility in learning*.

Based on this perception, Dutch teachers promote learner autonomy with the following categories: (2) *learning environment*, which includes the concepts of mixed-age classes and level-appropriate learning of students. Then, this category influences (3) *teachers' efforts as a coach*, which includes the concepts of educating how to plan and work as a coach.

Moreover, two categories are indicated: (4) *utilization of various resources*, which includes the concepts of English conversation online and materials beyond textbooks, and (5) *students' learning style*, which includes the concepts of peer cooperation and expressing students' opinions. (2) *learning environment* improves (3) *teachers' efforts as a coach* and (4) *utilization of various resources*. Moreover, (4) *utilization of various resources* actively improves (5) *students' learning style*. Furthermore, (3) *teachers' efforts as a coach* affect (4) *utilization of various resources* and (5) *students' learning style*. These are all teacher efforts to promote learner autonomy.

Regarding the ideal support for learner autonomy, one category was indicated, that is, (6) *aiming for enthusiastic class participation*, which includes the concepts of grasping of student needs and providing students freedom in learning. These concepts encourage students to become autonomous learners, eliminating the fear of learning. However, there is a hindrance to learner autonomy, that is, (7) *insufficient English lessons*, which prevents the realization of (6) *aiming for enthusiastic class participation*. Lastly, regarding cultural influences on learner autonomy, (8) *equal relationships between teachers and students* influence the promotion of learner autonomy in the Netherlands.

DT 3, a female fifth-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, mentioned that she would like to provide her students the right to freedom in learning as follows: "They have that freedom to find out, 'How do I learn?' And that's... And we have to provide it. It's not

that they can scream in the classroom.” Moreover, she provided the researcher with some photographs of the learning spaces in the school where she works (see Figure 22).

Figure 22

Learning Space for the Students at DT 3’s Elementary School



Note. These photos are randomly placed and have no relation to the actual location of this elementary school.

According to DT 3, students can learn anywhere they want. She insisted that by studying in a place of the student’s choosing and learning the contents of their plans together with the teacher, the student’s motivation to learn increases and they grow up to be autonomous learners. It is one of the concepts of providing students freedom in learning, which leads to (6) *aiming for enthusiastic class participation* after the teacher grasps the students’ needs.

4.3 Textbook and Teacher Manual Analysis

To determine the cultural influences on learner autonomy in Japanese and Dutch English classrooms, their English textbooks and teacher manuals were analyzed. To do so, the researcher created checklists combining Reeve's (2016, p. 136) three critical motivational stages during lessons and Reinders' (2010, p. 46) eight stages in the development of learner autonomy, which was used as a checklist for textbook analysis by Reinders and Balçikanli (2011, p. 269).

The three stages in Reeve's (2016) proposal are prelesson reflection, start of the lesson, and in-lesson. In addition, the eight stages in Reinders and Balçikanli's (2011) checklist are identifying needs, setting goals, planning to learn, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, practicing, monitoring progress, and assessment and revision. Combining these ideas of analysis provides an explicit picture of where each learning process takes place in the lesson. The researcher then used the criteria of stages in the development of learner autonomy by Reinders (2010) to determine the presence or absence of items in the checklist (Section 3.2.3.1).

4.3.1 Japanese and Dutch Textbook Analysis

The present study analyzed the Japanese and Dutch third to sixth-grade textbooks and teacher manuals. The Dutch intermediary translated the Dutch parts found in Dutch textbooks into English for ease of analysis by the researcher.

Semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers were also cited later to support the Yes and No points of this checklist. The criteria for Yes or No in the checklist was based on the items of learner-directed in stages in the development of learner autonomy stated in Reinders' (2010, p. 46) paper. These criteria were used by Reinders and Balçikanli (2011, p. 267) as well for their textbook analysis. Tables 14 and 15 presents the checklist for learning stages in the Japanese and Dutch textbooks, respectively.

Table 14

Checklist for Learning Stages in the Japanese Textbooks

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Japanese textbook include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Let's Try! 1</i> (G3)	<i>Let's Try! 2</i> (G4)	New Horizon 5 (G5)	<i>New Horizon 6</i> (G6)	
		Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 8 units.	Consists of 8 units.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Let's Try! 1 & Let's Try! 2</i> : At the beginning of each unit, students watch and listen to "Let's Watch and Think," "Let's Sing," "Let's Chant" and will present what they found or noticed by themselves.
	Setting goals	No	No	No	No	
	Planning learning	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting resources	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting learning strategies	No	No	No	No	
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>Let's Try! 1 & Let's Try! 2</i> : In the "Activity" sections in each unit, students communicate with their classmates and/or present them to the class using the English vocabulary and expressions they have learned. <i>New Horizon 5 & New Horizon 6</i> : In the sections "Let's try," "Small Talk," and "Enjoy Communication" in each unit, students practice speaking about themselves with their classmates using the English vocabulary they have learned.
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress	No	No	No	No	
	Assessment and revision	No	No	Yes	Yes	<i>New Horizon 5 & New Horizon 6</i> : After every 3 or 2 units, students make a speech using learning English and they self-assess it with the number of stars in the section titled "How did you do?"

Table 15

Checklist for Learning Stages in the Dutch Textbooks

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Dutch textbook include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Groove Me</i> (G3)	<i>Groove Me</i> (G4)	<i>All-in-1: Project Europe</i> (G5)	<i>All-in-1: Project Modern History</i> (G6)	
		Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 5 themes.	Consists of 5 themes.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p><i>Groove Me</i>, G3 & G4: The unit begins with a "Watch the Clip" where students watch the video and explore what they will learn from it.</p> <p><i>All-in-1</i>, G5: At the beginning of the unit, there is a section that reminds the students of vocabulary regarding the theme of the unit.</p> <p><i>All-in-1</i>, G6: At the beginning of the unit, there is a section that asks the students about pre-knowledge of vocabulary related to the theme of the unit.</p>
	Setting goals	No	No	No	No	
	Planning learning	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting resources	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting learning strategies	No	No	No	No	
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p><i>Groove Me</i>, G3 & G4: There are activities in which students practice speaking about themselves with their classmates using the English vocabulary they have learned.</p> <p><i>All-in-1</i>, G5: There is an activity in which students interview each other about the unit theme.</p> <p><i>All-in-1</i>, G6: Students complete the unfinished sentences using the vocabulary they have learned in the quiz sections.</p>
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: Students check their comprehension with the lyrics displayed in the <i>karaoke</i> function by themselves.
	Assessment and revision	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: After completing two lessons, students self-assess each goal item if they have achieved the goals presented in the first lesson. Also, students are asked to rate their learning on a 5-star scale.

In the Japanese textbooks, in the prelesson reflection, identifying needs was found in third- and fourth-grade textbooks but not in fifth and sixth-grade textbooks. In third and fourth-grade textbooks, the first page of each unit has a section titled either “Let’s Watch and Think,” “Let’s Sing,” or “Let’s Chant.” Students are encouraged to watch, listen, and think about what they will learn from one of them. For instance, the learning theme is “How are you?” in Unit 2 of *Let’s Try! 1*. The section “Let’s Watch and Think 1” asks students to watch the video and think about what they are saying. Moreover, the learning theme is “Do you have a pen?” in Unit 5 of *Let’s Try! 2*, and the section “Let’s Watch and Think 1” asks students to watch the video and think about how many there are. These student activities match the definition of identifying needs advocated by Reinders (2010): “learner experiences difficulties in using language” (p. 46).

Regarding the fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks, *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* have sections titled “Starting Out” at the start of each unit. In this section, students watch and listen to the digital material and answer the question. The work is limited to watching the video and answering the questions, and no description allows the students think about the difficult parts or what English words came out. Nevertheless, JT 2, a sixth-grade male teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, stated the following:

It is very important to get involved with various people, so if there is such a stimulus, children will be very autonomous, or they will actively want to learn from a sense of necessity rather than a feeling of being forced to do it.

During the semi-structured interview, JT 2 stated “various people,” which refer not only foreigners but also local people as well. It means that communicating with other people fosters autonomy.

In the Dutch textbooks, the presence of identifying needs was confirmed for all third to sixth graders. For third and fourth graders in *Groove Me*, there is a digital content page called “Watch the Clip” at the start of each lesson. On this page, students listen to a pop song and answer quizzes, in which students can explore what they learn. *Groove Me* has one song per unit, and 12 songs are present for third to fourth graders (one unit consists of two lessons). All songs are popular pop songs. For instance, Song 1 for third graders is “I Don’t Care” by Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber, and Song 10 for fourth graders is “Wellerman” by Nathan Evans. One unit is structured for students to learn words and expressions through a song. In addition, teaching materials are created to make students aware of necessary vocabulary and expressions in each unit.

For fifth graders, the learning theme was Europe in the textbook *All-in-1*. The students were initially asked to provide words they know regarding holiday. Specifically, under the setting of going on a holiday with a boy called *Sam*, who appears in the textbook,

Sam asks the students, “We are going on holiday. Are you coming too?” This invitation becomes an opportunity for students to use English according to their needs.

For sixth graders, the learning theme was modern history. The first part of the unit asked students some words (e.g., crown, queen, king, and emperor) that are related to modern history. This question draws on the prior knowledge of the student. DT 2 stated during his semi-structured interview as follows: “Well, learner autonomy, I think, is all about, uh, listening and listening to the children what they want to, uh, want to learn.” He claimed that it was important to first listen to students and understand their needs.

When it comes to setting goals in the prelesson reflection, Reinders (2010, p, 46) defines it as “contextually determined, relatively flexible” for learner-directed. However, all Japanese and Dutch textbooks examined for this research did not match this definition. The Japanese third- and fourth-grade textbooks *Let’s Try! 1* and *Let’s Try! 2* even do not imply the unit goal. On the contrary, Japanese fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* present a goal in each unit. For instance, *New Horizon 5* states “Our Goal: Tell your classmates your name and what you like” (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021a, p. 10) in Unit 1. Moreover, *New Horizon 6* states “Our Goals: Tell your classmates your name, what you like and your birthday” (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021c, p. 6) in Unit 1. Even though the goals are presented in the textbooks, they are already fixed and there is no opportunity for students to participate in a decision.

The Dutch textbook *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders present lesson goals for each lesson. For instance, *Groove Me* for third graders presents the goals of Song 1 as follows:

What are you going to do? In the lessons for this song, you have a conversation about dressing up. For this, you will learn in lesson 1:

- words for animals and people
- phrases to say how you want to dress up
- phrases to say what you think of something (Blink, 2023)

The textbook already has these fixed goals, which does not foster flexibility. In addition, the Dutch fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks *All-in-1* do not present students' setting goals.

Moreover, the Japanese and Dutch third- to sixth-grade textbooks did not foster planning learning, selecting resources, and selecting learning strategies. However, with respect to planning learning, JT 1 ideally wants the students to be involved in planning the lesson, as follows:

I number the order of the activities on the far left of the blackboard. For example, we usually practice greeting first, and so on. ... An ideal class would allow children to do whatever they want for 45 minutes. Sometimes I leave it up to children, but it's also a matter of trust. Many things in school tell children to do this or that. However, there are four things that I am conscious of trusting, entrusting, waiting, and supporting. I

want to give the children enough time to think about the class content. I always say to my students that this is not my class, it's your class.

In addition, DT 4, a female fifth-grade teacher with 10 years of teaching experience, stated as follows: "They work with the task of the week, and it is their responsibility at the end of the week that all your task is finished."

Ideally, JT 1 wants the students to plan (actually, his students take classes according to the flow he presented). On the contrary, DT 4 supports students to plan the content of learning until they reach their goals.

As for the practice stage in Lesson Begins (Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity), in both Japanese and Dutch textbooks, there are frequent interactive activities in pairs and/or groups using English vocabulary and expressions they have learned in that unit. As for the Japanese textbooks *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2*, in the "Activity" sections in each unit, students have to practice communication with their classmates and/or present to the class using the English vocabulary and expressions they have learned. For instance, the theme title of Unit 4 of *Let's Try! 1* is "I like blue," and in Activity 2, students are instructed to "introduce yourself by telling the class what you like" (MEXT, 2018b, p. 17). This way, students could independently use and practice the English they have learned and present it to the whole class. The theme title of Unit 7 of *Let's Try! 2* is "What do you want?" In Activity 2, the textbook instructs the students to "exchange food cards with your

friends and introduce them to your original pizzas” (MEXT, 2018d, p. 29). In this unit, students learn vocabulary related to food, for example, they can think about their favorite pizza and communicate it to their classmates. This activity facilitates students to use English autonomously.

The Japanese fifth and sixth graders’ textbooks *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* have sections titled “Let’s Try,” “Small Talk,” and “Enjoy Communication” in each unit. Therefore, students can practice speaking about themselves with their classmates using the English vocabulary they have learned. In Unit 1 of *New Horizon 5*, students are instructed to ask each other “What sport do you like?” (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021a, p. 12). In addition, in Unit 2 of *New Horizon 6*, the textbook asks students to say “What is your treasure?” (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021c, p. 20). These small talks provide opportunities for students to communicate autonomously in English. JT 4, a third-grade female teacher with 4 years of teaching experience, allows students not only to interact in English as described in the textbook but also to interact in a game format, she said: “I try to teach English in a game format as much as possible. At the end of the class, I let children play games with the student sitting next to them.”

Moreover, the third- to sixth-grade Dutch and Japanese textbooks include instructions that students can practice learning English autonomously. For instance, *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders have activities in which students can practice speaking about themselves

with their classmates using the English vocabulary they have learned. The third graders' textbook instructs students to work on one of the sections as follows:

What do you want to be?

- a. Work with a classmate. Read the conversation. Fill in the gaps with your own words. Look at the pictures or think of something yourself.
- b. Practice the conversation with a classmate. Finished? Switch roles. Do this three times, [and] choose a different costume each time. (Blink, 2023)

Students are instructed to complete a conversation using the vocabulary learned in the first activity, while looking at the six photographs in the digital teaching materials, and then to have proactively converse in the second activity. DT 1, a female third-grade teacher with 4 years of teaching experience, mentioned the importance of strengthened peer cooperation to enhance their autonomous learning as follows: "Those students can learn from each other and, umm, like what I said, it's not that I am answering all their questions."

The fifth graders' textbook *All-in-1: Project Europe* instructs students to "ask your neighbors in English where they will go on a holiday" (Alles-in-1, 2010a, p. 7, Dutch intermediary translation). In addition, students are provided with opportunities to actively use the vocabulary they have learned through their interactions. In the Dutch sixth graders' textbook *All-in-1: Project Modern History*, there are quiz sections and the textbook asks students to "complete the unfinished sentences using the vocabulary they have learned"

(Alles-in-1, 2010c, p. 26, Dutch intermediary translation). Therefore, the students have a lot of opportunities to use English through these activities autonomously.

As for the monitoring progress in In-Lesson: (Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise), Reinders (2010) defines it as “self-monitoring, peer feedback” (p. 46). However, Japanese third- to sixth-grade textbooks did not include any monitoring progress stage. Even though Japanese fifth and sixth graders’ textbooks *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6*, respectively, have a section called “Check Your Steps” after every two or three units, this section simply instructs students to paste the work created in the previous units into their textbooks and does not allow students to monitor their own learning. Nevertheless, JT 1 insisted that self-monitoring and peer feedback are important to foster thinking and solve problem autonomously, as follows: “I thought it might be the skill to think and act on their own or to go to a higher level while talking with their peers.”

On the contrary, in the Dutch textbook *Groove Me*, there is a *Karaoke* segment at the end of the unit for the students to review the lesson and check their comprehension by themselves. For instance, in Song 1 for third graders’ *Groove Me*, the digital material’s page asks the students to check their comprehension regarding the words related to clothes as follows: “Watch the clip and sing the chorus (in green) along! How are Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber dressed up in the *I Don’t Care* clip?” (Blink, 2023). Moreover, although the Dutch

fifth and sixth graders' textbook *Alles-in-1* contains many activities regarding vocabulary, there is no monitoring stage.

Finally, in the assessment and revision stage in In-Lesson (Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise), Reinders (2010) defines it as “self-assessment, reflection” (p. 46) by learner-directed. The third and fourth-grade Japanese textbooks *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* did not include descriptions of student self-assessment, while the fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* included them. Moreover, the Dutch textbook *Groove Me* for the third and fourth grades has a self-assessment segment; however, the textbook *All-in-1* for the fifth and sixth graders has no such component.

According to Reinders (2010), “It is important that the assessment be linked to the learner's previous work” (p. 49). The Japanese third and fourth-grade textbooks *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* instruct students to write about what they enjoyed and discovered during their third grade and what they learned during their fourth grade after learning all units. However, these are merely students' impressions of their learning throughout the year, not self-assessment of what they have learned.

On the contrary, for the Japanese fifth and sixth-grade textbooks *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6*, after every three or two units, students are instructed to make a speech using English and self-assess it with one to three stars in the section titled “How did you do?”

Therefore, students have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and presenting them. JT 1 emphasized the students' self-assessment as follows:

Even though it's class, it's the responsibility of each child, so if the children don't think about it themselves in the class, no matter how much I think and give instructions, the children will think and decide for themselves. I believe that it is the most important thing for children to do things thinking by themselves, and my idea is getting stronger.

As for *Groove Me* for Dutch third and fourth graders, after completing two lessons, the digital textbook instructs students to self-assess each goal item to check if they have achieved them. For instance, the instruction is as follows: "Now you can say what you want to dress up as, say what you need to dress up, [and] use words for colors" (Blink, 2023). In addition, students need to rate their learning on a 5-star scale. Therefore, these are self-assessment and revision learner-directed measures. On the contrary, Dutch fifth- and sixth-grade textbook *All-in-1* did not indicate the assessment and revision stage. However, DT 4 emphasized the time for reflection through dialogue between the teacher and the student, as follows:

... 'Reflection conversations.' This is the thing that we do a lot and talk about, 'Well, why are you not finished with your task? What can I do for you? What can you

change in your attitude that will be finished?’ That is all working about the independence of the students.

4.3.2 Japanese and Dutch Teacher Manual Analysis

The contents of the Japanese teacher manuals for third to sixth grades are created according to each page of the students’ textbook. For instance, the teacher manual of *New Horizon 5* for fifth graders has eight pages per unit, which is the number of pages for the textbook. These teacher manuals correspond exactly to the pages and content of the textbooks.

On the contrary, the Dutch teacher manuals, for example, *Groove Me*, have pages corresponding to the pages of the digital teaching materials used by the students, just like with Japanese teacher manuals. However, there is another page outlining the unit’s learning content, its objectives, and an overview of the singers covered in that chapter.

However, the Dutch fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manuals for *All-in-1* and the textbook itself have varying number of pages. For instance, the fifth-grade textbook *All-in-1: Project Europe* has 11 pages in English for the European-themed unit, whereas the teacher manual has only 7 pages for this unit. Therefore, the volume of Dutch teacher manuals varies greatly depending on the textbook company. In addition, DT 1 stated that depends on the teachers to use these manuals: “For English lessons, uh, we are working with a method so we have...we have got a book...and a teacher manual. Umm, and there’s, ...it’s quite free.”

The contents of the teacher manual are presented after the following checklists. For some parts of the teacher manuals that are written in Dutch, the Dutch intermediary translated them into English before the researcher examined them. Semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers were also cited afterward to support the Yes and No points of this checklist. The criteria for Yes or No in the checklist were based on the definitions of learner-directed in stages in the development of learner autonomy by Reinders (2010, p. 46). Tables 16 and 17 present the results that indicate the presence of autonomy in the Japanese and Dutch teacher manuals, respectively.

Table 16

Checklist for Learning Stages in the Japanese Teacher Manuals

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Japanese teacher manual include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Let's Try! 1, TG (G3)</i>	<i>Let's Try! 2, TG (G4)</i>	<i>New Horizon 5, TG (G5)</i>	<i>New Horizon 6, TG (G6)</i>	
		Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 8 units.	Consists of 8 units.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Let's Try! 1 & Let's Try! 2</i> : At the beginning of the unit, the teacher manuals instruct to have students present what they have noticed from "Let's Watch and Think," "Let's Sing," or "Let's Chant," then answer the teacher's questions, present their findings, and share them in class.
	Setting goals	No	No	No	No	
	Planning learning	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting resources	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting learning strategies	No	No	No	No	
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>Let's Try! 1 & Let's Try! 2</i> : The manuals state that to support students so that they can work autonomously through activities. <i>New Horizon 5 & New Horizon 6</i> : Through the "Challenge" section, teacher manuals introduce activity options so that students can work autonomously.
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress	No	No	No	No	
	Assessment and revision	No	No	No	No	

Table 17

Checklist for Learning Stages in the Dutch Teacher Manuals

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Dutch teacher manual include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Groove Me, HB (G3)</i>	<i>Groove Me, HB (G4)</i>	<i>All-in-1: Project Europe, HB (G5)</i>	<i>All-in-1: Project Modern History, HB (G6)</i>	
		Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 5 themes.	Consists of 5 themes.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: At the beginning of each unit, the teacher watches a video of the song being studied with the students and asks them what they are learning about. <i>All-in-1</i> , G5 & G6: At the beginning of each unit, the teacher checks the students' prior knowledge of the vocabulary they will learn.
	Setting goals	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: Teachers and students discuss what they will do and learn in the lesson.
	Planning learning	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting resources	No	No	No	No	
	Selecting learning strategies	No	No	No	No	
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: The teacher manuals state that students should use their learned vocabulary and work independently on the exercises. <i>All-in-1</i> , G5 & G6: Teachers support students as they use the vocabulary they have learned to exercise independently and practice speaking in pairs freely.
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: The teacher supports students' reflection time by reviewing lesson contents together and asking questions to students.
	Assessment and revision	Yes	Yes	No	No	<i>Groove Me</i> , G3 & G4: After two lessons, the teacher reviews the lessons with the students, asking questions about what they remembered and discovered useful.

During the Prelesson Reflection (Planning and Preparing), Japanese teacher manuals for third and fourth graders (*Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2*) included identifying needs; however, the Japanese teacher manuals for fifth and sixth graders did not. The teacher manuals of *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* have sections titled “Let’s Watch and Think,” “Let’s Sing,” and “Let’s Chant” at the start of each unit, which students watch and listen to. These teacher manuals instruct teachers to facilitate students’ tasks and, ask them questions, and encourage them to present their findings and share them in class. According to the teacher manual of Unit 6 of *Let's Try! 1*, which consists of activities that teach capital letters of the alphabet, “It is fun to set the activity to search for letters in the classroom and their belongings, and to have students look for capital letters on the way to school and report the letters they find” (MEXT, 2018c, p. 25, author translation) after conducting “Let’s Watch and Think.”

As for *Let's Try! 2*, in the unit title “This is my favorite place,” in Unit 8, the teacher manual suggests that students practice names of school places, watching “Let’s Watch and Think.” This manual (MEXT, 2018e) states the following:

It is difficult for students to imagine the actual situation of directions outside of the classroom in the classroom, so set the activity that students guide classmates to their favorite places in school. Introducing each other’s favorite places along with the

reasons will be an opportunity for them to rediscover the good points of their school.

(p. 33, author translation)

JT 3 insisted that students learn and speak in English according to their actual needs; hence, they can learn it autonomously as follows:

If the content of the class is something that children can enjoy while moving their bodies, they will acquire English that can be used in places other than school. It is important to be able to use it in practice, and I believe that this will lead to self-directed learning.

On the contrary, as for the Japanese fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manuals for *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6*, although the first page of each unit has a section called “Starting Out” that contains the listening questions students will engage in that chapter, the teacher manuals only indicate the most important question items but do not provide instructions or suggestions for identifying student needs.

However, Dutch teacher manuals for third to sixth graders (*Groove Me* and *All-in-1*) include the stage of identifying needs. At the start of each unit of *Groove Me*, the teacher manual instructs teachers to watch a video clip of the song with the students and ask them questions. For instance, an instruction is cited from Song 1 for third graders as follows:

Play back the phrases one by one and discuss their meaning. Then play part of the music video. The students may stand up when they notice something in the video.

Lastly, tap the correct sentences. – *Let's watch the together. What's it about? Stand up if you see one of the sentences in the clip.* (Blink, 2023, p. 12, Dutch intermediary translation)

The sentences in italics are model examples of the teacher's questions in English. Regarding *Groove Me* for fourth graders, the teacher manual instructs the teachers that students discuss the song after watching its video clip as follows:

Watch the part of the video together. Have the students think of which two images fit the song. Optionally have them discuss in pairs of two beforehand. Discuss the song's title The Wellerman is a ship owned by the Weller brothers. It brought supplies to whalers out at sea. – *Let's watch the clip together. What is the song about?* (Blink, 2023, p. 116, Dutch intermediary translation)

Moreover, as for the teacher manual of *All-in-1* for fifth and sixth graders, at the start of each unit, the manual instructs teachers to check the students' prior knowledge of the vocabulary to be discussed. For instance, the teacher manual for fifth graders states, "Present the words of the week (optionally listen to the proper pronunciation when doing the games)" (Alles-in-1, 2010b, p. 61, Dutch intermediary translation). In addition, the teacher manual for the sixth graders mentions, "You will present the words of the week (optionally listen to the proper pronunciation when doing the game)" (Alles-in-1, 2010d, p. 54, Dutch intermediary translation).

DT 2, a male teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, stated that Dutch teachers could coach the students according to their needs as follows:

... it's nice to give them a certain scope in which they can pick their own, uh, uh, things they want to learn. And we can coach them and, uh, of course, steer them a bit to what, what they need to know. And add that to what they want to know.

With respect to the setting goals stage, four Japanese teacher manuals (i.e., *Let's Try! 1*, *Let's Try! 2*, *New Horizon 5*, and *New Horizon 6*) did not allow flexibility. All four manuals had clearly set goals and did not provide any opportunity for students to be involved in setting them. Moreover, JT 4, a female third-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, argued during her semi-structured interview that Japanese textbooks have high expectations from students, even though the classes are progressing according to the unit goals of the textbooks. JT 4 mentioned the following: "I realize the textbook wants the children to acquire deeper points than I expect of them. I feel like these goals become obstacles."

Regarding Dutch teacher manuals, only the third and fourth-graders' textbook *Groove Me* allowed students to be involved in goal setting. For instance, *Groove Me* for third graders presents three goals that students can see on the digital material, and the teacher manual instructs as follows: "Discuss with the students what they will be doing and learning during this lesson. – *Let's find out what we will learn in this lesson*" (Blink, 2023, p. 12, Dutch

intermediary translation). In addition, the teacher manual of *Groove Me* for fourth graders instructs as follows: “Discuss the purpose of today’s lesson with the students. – *Let’s have a look at what you are going to learn*” (Blink, 2023, p. 116, Dutch intermediary translation).

On the teacher manual of *All-in-1* for fifth and sixth graders, the same goals for each unit are set regardless of grade levels and learning contents, as follows: “(1) memorizing, pronouncing, and translating English words and (2) being able to pronounce, understand, and translate the short dialogue” (Alles-in-1, 2010b, 2010d, Dutch intermediary translation). This is determined by the course but not relatively flexible as Reinders (2010) defined for setting goals.

With respect to the planning learning stage, the Japanese teacher manuals for third to sixth graders do not indicate flexibility that considers students in making decisions. Even though *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* offer two options of model lesson plans per lesson, only teachers can decide which plan to choose. Even so, JT 3, a female fourth-grade teacher with 20 years of teaching experience, stated the importance of planning by students themselves during her semi-structured interview as follows:

I think learner autonomy is about independence. I think that it is important not only for the children’s interests, but also for them to be able to research things on their own, plan and think for themselves, and carry out activities.

In addition, JT 3 highlighted the significance of doing research with planning to promote student autonomy.

On the Dutch side, the flow of learning is fixed in teacher manuals for third to sixth graders. Nevertheless, DT 3 stated during her semi-structured interview that in the Netherlands, teachers include the students in the planning, as follows: “And because we start very young, like when they are seven, we learned to plan at the beginning with the teacher.” Furthermore, DT 2, a male sixth-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, revealed during his semi-structured interview that his students are free to choose the order in which they do their tasks. In addition, he stated the following: “So we explain everything, then there are, uh, certain tasks they need to complete before the end of the lesson, and they are free to do with in which order, uh, they want to do it.”

With respect to selecting resources and selecting learning strategies, which Reinders (2010, p. 46) defines as self-selection by learners, all four-grade Japanese and Dutch teacher manuals did not show any element that fosters learner autonomy. For instance, regarding self-selection by learners in Unit 1, the Japanese teacher manual for third graders asserts that instead of showing the students digital videos prepared for them, the manual suggests “the students are further encouraged to use the internet to show them the state of various countries” (MEXT, 2018c, p. 5). Hence, this will be the teacher’s choice. Regarding freedom and flexibility, JT 2, a male sixth-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, insisted

that even though there are plenty of digital teaching materials, the problem is the scarcity of resources in English teaching as a communication tool, as follows:

I think my problem is the feeling of being busy and the lack of resources due to not being open. I wonder if it's a hindrance, a hindrance to children's autonomy.... In terms of English, I'm surprised that the digital textbooks are so well made. It's easy to use, it's easy to hit the children's troubles, it's easy to solve, and it's very good material. Inevitably, rather than being a tool, it is more test-oriented, and English as a subject is regarded more. However, I think that English is more of a communication tool.

The Japanese fifth and sixth graders' teacher manuals for *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* suggest that teachers can modify resources to meet student's needs in each unit. For instance, in Unit 1 of *New Horizon 5*, teachers allow students to use activity sheets instead of writing in the textbooks when they are asked about their favorite things to each other (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021b, p. 12). However, this is still the teacher's choice.

On the Dutch side, regarding selecting resources, the lessons in *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders are divided into two (levels A and B) according to the students' English proficiency. In addition, extra worksheets are prepared for each lesson according to the students' progress. However, teachers provide these activities according to the teacher manual. Regarding student placement, according to DT 4, a female fifth-grade Dutch teacher

with 10 years of teaching experience, many Dutch schools divide students into different levels: “And the thing that is working in levels more schools in the Netherlands are going in this progress, not just all the classes same, but working in levels so you can go and look it up.” In addition, he stated that students need to learn with their responsibility at their level as follows:

We separate the children who are not so good in English; their English is slow speaks and with a lot of translation into Dutch. And I teach in the other half of the class, and that our students that are, yes, a little bit more intelligent, or are better in English and I am talking English the whole class long, and they have to give me the answer always. But that means they make their own choice to be with me in the class. That is their responsibility.

Regarding the Dutch teacher manual of *All-in-1* for fifth and sixth graders, teachers choose resources for student assignments in a game format. For instance, the fifth-grade teacher manual suggests that “in addition, there will be time spent on dialogue. Inform the children about the games of the week. Optionally use the digital board” (Alles-in-1, 2010b, p. 61, Dutch intermediary translation).

With respect to selecting learning strategies, Japanese teacher manuals introduce various ideas for activities that a teacher can select to suit the students’ needs. For instance, *Let’s Try! 1* for third graders states that “there are various songs on the market that deal with

the alphabet, so it is good to select and use songs that suit the interests of children” (MEXT, 2018c, p. 27, author translation) to encourage students to be familiar with the alphabet. JT 4 mentioned during her semi-structured interview that she implemented games as much as possible for students to enjoy a fun English class as follows:

I try to teach English in a game format as much as possible. At the end of the class, I let the children play a game with the students sitting next to them. Well, I think it becomes an activity. If it is difficult, the children will end up saying, “Well, foreign languages are difficult.” Third-grade students learn English for the first time, so I try to make sure that everyone can enjoy it as much as possible.

Therefore, JT 4 managed to implement fun activities as a learning strategy; which is not always the case to all teachers.

As for Japanese fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manuals, *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* have a section titled “Small Talk” in each unit, and a teacher shows a sample conversation found in the manual to students before starting a conversation. For instance, in Unit 3 in *New Horizon 5*, the target sentence in the textbook is “Do you like rainy days?” and the teacher manual states “Yes, I do. I have a nice umbrella.” Furthermore, the teacher manual suggests going forward to the next section “Word Link” and facilitates the students to use the phrase “Why?” (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021b, p. 26). However, the teacher merely instructs them to do so, which does not foster learner autonomy.

On the Dutch teacher manuals, *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders and *All-in-1* for fifth and sixth graders did not indicate learning strategies by learner selection. The Dutch fifth-grade teacher manual suggests assisting students in making word lists, after conducting the peer work about the theme of Europe. The teacher manual states the following:

Are there any children who know French, Spanish, or German words (or words from any other European languages)? Teaching each other those words is usually a lot of fun. You can make word lists on the board (or a large piece of paper) or make folders on the computer to which the children can add words. (Alles-in-1, 2010b, p. 61, Dutch intermediary translation)

However, this is progressed by the teacher's initiative but not student autonomy. Meanwhile, as for Dutch teacher manuals for sixth graders, students' activities can be conducted with classmates or individually, as the manual instructs as follows:

The dialogue must be read aloud and subsequently translated together with the children. Alternatively, levels DEF can work on the translation independently, after which the children will practice in pairs of two. (Alles-in-1, 2010d, p. 74, Dutch intermediary translation)

The Dutch teacher instructs the students whether they work with peers or individually according to their English levels before further pair work; however, this is still a teacher's initiative. Nevertheless, DT 1, a female third-grade teacher with 4 years of teaching

experience, stated that she let her students think about an assignment by themselves or individually before they can ask the teacher for the students to think autonomously, as follows:

...I learned that strategy—strategies, uh, for what to do. ...first, they can ask their classmates. Umm, they can read, uh, the assignments again. Then they can ask another classmate. And then they come to me. Otherwise, students, if they don't know what to do, they will say, "Oh, teacher, teacher."

This reflects Reinders' (2010) point: "An important related point is to recognize the improvements learners make in their choice and use of learning strategies, by giving regular feedback and by awarding credit on the basis of progress in this area" (p. 48).

With respect to the practice stage in Lesson Begins (Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity), Japanese and Dutch teacher manuals indicated the presence of implementation (language use) and experimentation advocated by Reinders (2010, p. 46).

The Japanese third and fourth-grade teacher manuals *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* have "Activity" sections per unit. These manuals state that the importance of supporting students so that they can work autonomously through the activities. For instance, a fourth graders' teacher manual instructs to conduct a quiz competition in which students create quizzes using English. In addition, the manual states the following: "Support children for them to be able to

demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and skills that they have become accustomed to so that they can work autonomously” (MEXT, 2018e, p. 32, author translation).

On the Japanese teacher manuals for fifth and sixth graders, in the “Challenge” section, various activities that allow students to work autonomously were provided. For instance, the Japanese fifth-grade teacher manual of *New Horizon 5* in Unit 2 (the unit title is “When is your birthday?”) suggests teachers to encourage students to use learned expressions autonomously as follows:

Students need to get used to the expression that puts “in” before the month. You can let students choose from the list or from Japanese events freely. (Tokyo Shoseki, 2021b, p. 25, author translation).

JT 5, a female third-grade teacher in her first year, suggested in her semi-structured interview that having opportunities to use English beyond the scope of textbooks results in children’s autonomous learning:

Children should meet [foreign people] face-to-face as much as possible. I think that would allow children to think more deeply. There is an ALT in the 5th and 6th-grade classes, and every time the children meet him in the hallway, they say, “Wow!” so real experiences are important after all, I think.

The Dutch teacher manuals for grades three to six included a practice stage. The third- and fourth-grade teacher manuals for *Groove Me* state that “the following worksheet

exercises may be completed by the students independently” (Blink, 2023, p. 11, Dutch intermediary translation), using the vocabulary they have learned.

The fifth- and sixth-grade *All-in-1* teacher manuals state that teachers must support students while using the vocabulary they have learned to exercise independently and practice speaking freely in pairs. For instance, the sixth-grade teacher manual suggests a student activity as follows: “You will let the children read the next text independently. Are they able to translate it? Level F will also be writing their own short stories (Alles-in-1, 2010d, p. 54, Dutch intermediary translation). The task of allowing students to create stories themselves is a practical and autonomous activity.

With respect to the monitoring progress of In-Lesson (Addressing and Solving the Problem that Arises), Japanese third and fourth graders’ teacher manuals did not indicate any from the point of self-monitoring and peer feedback as Reinders (2010, p. 46) describes. In addition, Japanese fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manuals of *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* did not indicate any student self-monitoring and peer feedback either. Even though there are “Check Your Steps” sections in the fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks, the teacher manual does not explain how students can effectively use this section as self-monitoring or peer feedback.

On the contrary, the Dutch teacher manual of *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders describes how teachers support students’ self-monitoring progress using the *Karaoke* function. The teacher manual for the third grade (Song 1) instructs as follows:

Finish up the lesson with karaoke by having the students sing along to the chorus of *I Don't Care* (marked green). If they are able to sing along with any other parts of the song, they are of course allowed to do so as well! Once finished, make an inventory of the costumes featured in the video. The students may reply in English or Dutch. When they reply in Dutch, repeat whatever they said back to them in English, for example: *Yes, that's right. He was a ballet dancer.* (Blink, 2023, p. 13, Dutch intermediary translation)

This teacher's manual states that after students check their comprehension of learning contents, the teacher should review the lesson with students, ask students questions, and provide them with feedback.

The Dutch fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manuals of *All-in-1* did not indicate the student self-monitoring stage even though there are many activities that students can work on. However, the teacher manual did not mention peer or teacher feedback. Regarding the importance of teacher's feedback to students, DT 3, a female fifth-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, explained the following during her semi-structured interview:

Because we have once a week, we have feedback time. So I will call my students.

And we will look at this and look at the work. And it will say, "I can see that you do not understand the fractions yet. What do you think you can do about it?" And they learn to be responsible to say, "Oh, can I have an extra lesson? Can I write myself

in?” Because twice a week, there’s always an extra instruction. And then they have to do it themselves. Of course, we push them. And then we lead the way. But they are responsible for that lesson.

According to DT 3, feedback time between the teacher and students is significant to encourage students to be more responsible for their own learning.

Lastly, the assessment and revision stage, the Japanese teacher manual of *Let’s Try! 1* and *Let’s Try! 2* did not indicate students’ self-assessment and reflection. Meanwhile, Japanese fifth- and sixth-grade teacher manual of *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* did not indicate any means of effectively using student self-assessment despite having these sections.

On the contrary, the Dutch teacher manual of *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders instructs the teacher to let students review the lesson goals by themselves. For instance, Lesson 2 of Song 1 for third graders and Lesson 2 of Song 10 for fourth graders have the following instruction to teachers: “Review with the class goals of lesson 1 and 2. What do the children remember? What did they find useful?” (Blink, 2023, p. 15, Dutch intermediary translation). These parts facilitate students to reflect on their learning by themselves while the teacher monitors them. Contrary to this, DT 2, a male sixth-grade teacher with 5 years of teaching experience, commented that he assesses the students’ progress, as follows: “As long as it, uh, done at the end, then we check if they achieved the, the goals that we set for them,

gave them.” That is to say, DT 2 monitors if the students have achieved their goals even if there is no instruction in the teacher manual.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Implications of this Study

This section discusses the results in relation to the following research questions 1 to 5, which were obtained using mixed methods.

1. What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
2. In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?
3. What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
4. How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
5. How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

Regarding the answers to Research Questions 1 to 3, statistically, the survey instrument indicated that independence and curiosity did not have significant differences.

This means that Japanese and Dutch teachers both perceived them as aspects of learner autonomy. However, freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, and problem-solving

had significant differences between Japan and the Netherlands, with Japanese teachers' degree of perceptions lower than their Dutch counterparts.

This low degree of perception of the four factors in the Japanese demographic can be attributed to the fact that the survey question items were adapted from on Admiraal et al. (2019), which were created in the European context. Nevertheless, the responses of Japanese teachers to the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews correspond to Research Questions 1 to 3, considering their own autonomy support strategies, which they have implemented or hope to implement in their classrooms other than the survey question items. This is why the open-ended questions and some parts of the semi-structured interviews elicited more common aspects of learner autonomy between Japan and the Netherlands than the 5-point Likert scale questions. In other words, the analysis of open-ended questions likely produced a more reliable comparison than the survey since the survey questions may have carried unconscious cultural biases.

5.1.1 Comparison of Views of Learner Autonomy between Japanese and Dutch Teachers

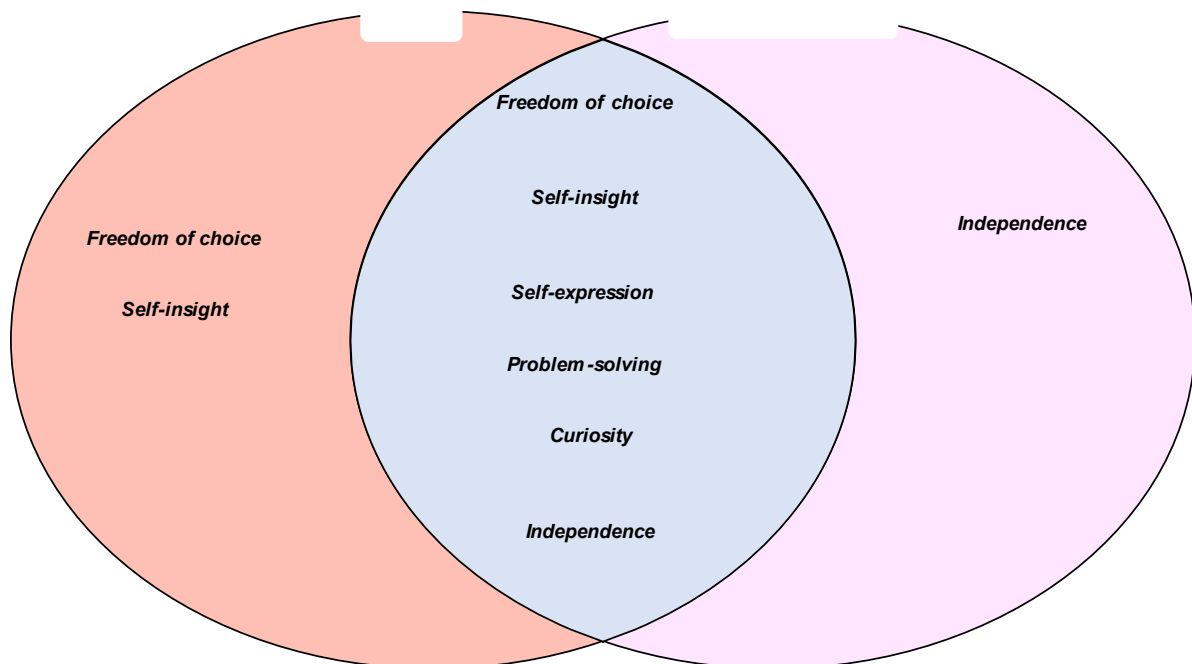
Research Question 1: What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

This research question was answered by 5-point Likert scale questions and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch

teachers. Figure 23 presents the categories and concepts of teachers' views on autonomy, which were divided into the common areas in Japan and the Netherlands, as well as individual areas.

Figure 23

Comprehensive Comparison of the Teachers' Views on Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category. The numbers (1) to (3) indicate which of the following research methods was used to discover each category and concept: (1) five-point Likert scale questions in the questionnaire, (2) open-ended questions in the questionnaire, and (3) semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers. (D:1), (J:2), and (J:3) in the overlapped area are the categories or concepts found only on the Dutch or Japanese side respectively. The categories or concepts with only numbers in the overlapped area are seen in both Japan and the Netherlands.

The Japanese and Dutch teachers' views on learner autonomy had a total of 13 concepts categorized into 9 categories. Ten concepts were common, two were seen only on the Japanese demographic, and one was seen only on the Dutch demographic. This means that Japanese and Dutch teachers share 76.9% of a common understanding of learner

autonomy, regardless of their varying national and educational cultural backgrounds. It also indicates that culture plays a smaller role than previously thought.

Moreover, the results of the multiple regression analysis of teachers' responses to the 5-point Likert scale question should be noted. Significant differences between Japan and the Netherlands regarding freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, and problem-solving were found. In other words, the results showed that Dutch teachers perceived these factors more highly for student autonomy than Japanese teachers. Nevertheless, the open-ended responses to the questionnaire revealed these four aspects, and the semi-structured interviews with Japanese teachers revealed that they also recognized problem-solving as part of their definition of student autonomy. Therefore, the Japanese teachers perceived all six aspects of student autonomy identified in Admiraal et al.'s (2019) study based on their responses to the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews, while the Dutch teachers recognized the six aspects based on their responses to the 5-point Likert scale questions and open-ended questions.

Therefore, there was a discrepancy in the results of the 5-point Likert scale and the open-ended questions. It can be interpreted that the survey instrument was not suited to Japanese teachers and hence not reliable because the questionnaire items were created on a European context by Admiraal et al.'s (2019) research. This means the question items of the 5-point Likert scale did not fit in the Japanese context. However, Japanese teachers could

respond to open-ended questions more flexibly than the 5-point Likert scale questions by applying their own classroom situations. Therefore, their responses to the open-ended questions indicate more concrete ideas of how Japanese teachers actually think about learner autonomy and their common notions with Dutch teachers.

Moreover, the results showed that both Japan and the Netherlands include keywords of the educational goals set by their respective countries' ministries of education. Specifically, on the Japanese demographic, the word independence was in the Japanese MEXT's goal of "fostering a spirit of autonomy and independence by respecting the value of the individual" (MEXT, 2012).

On the Dutch demographic, the word responsibility was strengthened in the educational objective of Dutch OCW (2021a) "to ensure that everyone is prepared for personal independence and responsibility." Therefore, Japanese and Dutch teachers consciously recognize the government's educational goals as part of their perceptions of learner autonomy. Dutch teachers frequently emphasized the term learner responsibility in the open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which has been used in defining learner autonomy (e.g., Cotterall, 2018; Hooge, 2017; Lennon, 2012; Little, 2006; Yagcioglu, 2015). Therefore, the concept of learners taking responsibility for their own learning is deeply rooted in Dutch teachers.

On the contrary, none of the Japanese teachers mentioned the relationship between autonomy and learners' responsibility in the questionnaires and interviews. Therefore, it was unclear whether Japanese teachers recognized that students should be responsible for their own learning. However, in the preamble of the new Course of Study (MEXT, 2017b), MEXT states that one of the educational objectives is “fostering the values of respect for justice, responsibility, equality between men and women, and mutual respect and cooperation, as well as the value of actively participating in building our society and contributing to its development, in the public spirit” (p. 1). Even though it was not specifically stated that students are responsible for their own learning, it can be interpreted that this notion is necessarily rooted among Japanese teachers; however, they did not mention it as a definition of learner autonomy.

5.1.2 Comparison of Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy between Japanese and Dutch

Teachers

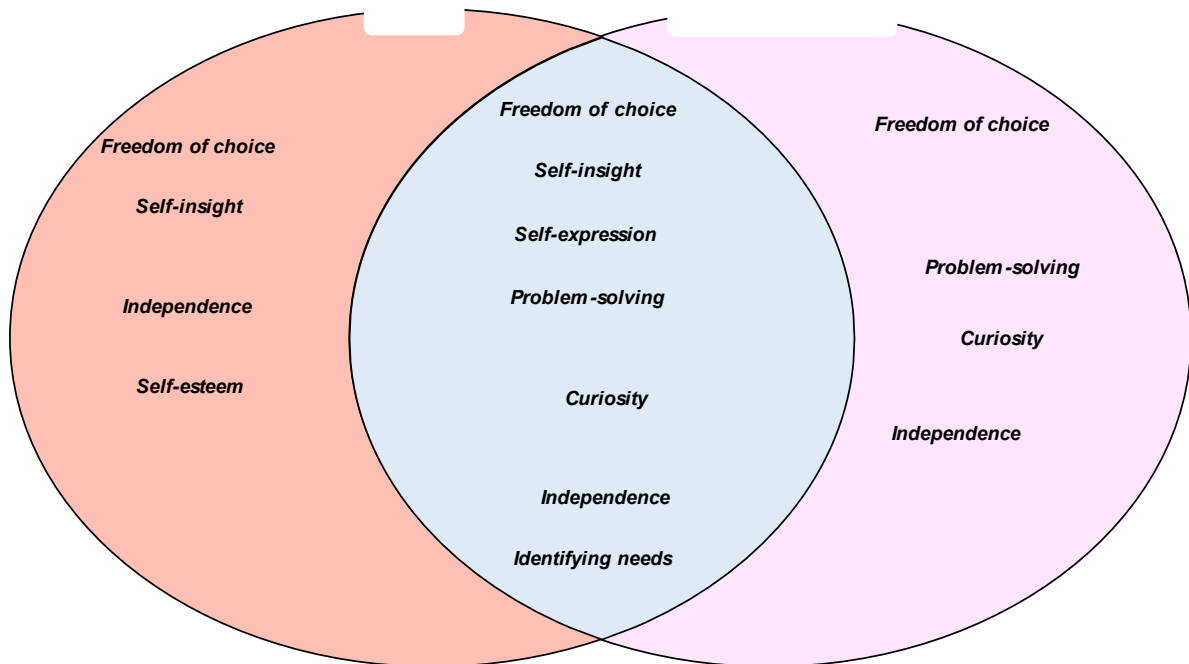
Research Question 2: In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?

This research question was answered using questionnaires consisting of 5-point Likert scale questions and open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch

teachers, analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals. Figure 24 presents how Japanese and Dutch teachers support student autonomy in their English classes.

Figure 24

Comprehensive Comparison of Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category. The numbers (1) to (4) indicate which of the following research methods was used to discover each category and concept: (1) five-point Likert scale questions in the questionnaire, (2) open-ended questions in the questionnaire, (3) semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and (4) textbook and teacher manual analysis. (D:1), (D:3), and (J:3) in the overlapped area are the categories or concepts found only on the Dutch or Japanese side respectively. The categories or concepts with only numbers in the overlapped area are seen in both Japan and the Netherlands.

Japanese and Dutch teachers' approaches to supporting student autonomy had 8 categories and 26 concepts. The category identifying needs in the converged area does not have a specific concept. The converged zone between Japan and the Netherlands has six categories with ten concepts and another category, that is, identifying needs. In other words, the common support for learner autonomy is about 40% for both countries.

Of the seven categories common to Japan and the Netherlands, six are adapted from Admiraal et al. (2019): freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence. Identifying needs was the only result obtained from the analysis of textbooks and teacher manuals. Furthermore, regarding freedom of choice and independence, there were initiatives to support students' autonomy development conducted by teachers only in Japan and the Netherlands. Regarding self-insight, the Japanese demographic has three concepts that the Dutch demographic has not. In addition, Japanese teachers try to increase students' self-esteem by praising them. On the contrary, Dutch teachers were striving in the aspects of problem-solving and curiosity that their Japanese counterparts were not.

Japanese teachers enhance motivation and foster autonomy by praising students and raising their self-esteem. Leis (2014) claims that when praising students as part of giving feedback, teachers must be careful about how they compliment children. According to him, many teachers praise a student's utterance or correct answers, rather than the process of effort; however, teachers should compliment a student's willingness to raise their hand to speak rather than whether the answer is correct. In other words, students should be praised for their efforts in the learning process and their willingness to share their learning with the class. Otherwise, students may feel that they will not be praised unless they give the correct answer, and, thus, may not speak up unless confident about their answers.

In contrast, Dutch teachers revealed in their interviews that they frequently monitor students during their learning process, reviewing and encouraging students to help them achieve their goals depending on their learning progress. During this process, it was noted that teachers always emphasized dialogue with students for problem-solving, which contrasts with Japanese teachers who simply praise students by saying “Good job” or “Great” when the answer is correct (Leis, 2014). It is assumed that when students are recognized for their achievements rather than the results of their learning, they will be more motivated to learn, and as a result, their autonomy will develop.

When the responses of the 5-point Likert scale questionnaire were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, the results showed a poor fit. In addition, after conducting multiple regression analysis, significant differences were found between the Dutch and Japanese responses regarding freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, and problem-solving. Therefore, these categories were not fostered by Japanese teachers as much as the Dutch teachers do. However, the responses to the open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews indicated that Japanese teachers also support the promotion of learner autonomy in these categories. Therefore, the results indicated that the Japanese teachers are striving to support students’ autonomy in their own unique ways.

With respect to selecting learning strategies under freedom of choice, none of the teacher manuals examined in Japan and the Netherlands contained any descriptions that

promoted student involvement. Therefore, even though there are no instructions in the teacher's manual, some teachers from both demographics involve their students in learning strategies to foster learner autonomy. Regarding the freedom of choice, Benson (2011) has quoted Cohen (1998) on this point, saying that teachers can reach the goal of promoting learner autonomy by allowing students to choose their strategies, even without continued encouragement from the teachers. Therefore, giving students the responsibility for their own learning through their own choices is an important factor to foster autonomous learners.

Regarding planning learning, which also belongs to the category freedom of choice on the Dutch side, Ruegg (2011) argued that Benson (2001) stated that teachers can improve students' autonomy through planning and assessment in the classroom. Therefore, this study found that educating students to plan by themselves was a significant factor in Dutch schools even for young learners, whereas Japanese teachers did not state it at all. In addition, with respect to arousing students' interests in the converged zone, according to McLoughlin (2020), "interest can lead to an increase in knowledge and expertise" (p. 67). Therefore, the teacher needs to boost student's interest for them to effectively acquire the knowledge required for learning English.

Unlike other items, it is noteworthy that the Japanese demographic implements self-study assignments, in which Japanese teachers encourage students to learn autonomously after school. Regarding the other items, the items common to Japan and the Netherlands, as

well as the efforts of teachers unique to each country, were all supported by teachers during class. While there was a Japanese teacher who did not have any views on learner autonomy for elementary students, there were Japanese teachers who imposed self-study assignments on students and taught them to respect their autonomy. From this, some Japanese teachers disregard the importance of allowing students to do self-study assignments outside of school because it has been a custom in Japanese elementary schools.

5.1.3 Comparison of Ideal Support for Learner Autonomy between Japanese and Dutch

Teachers

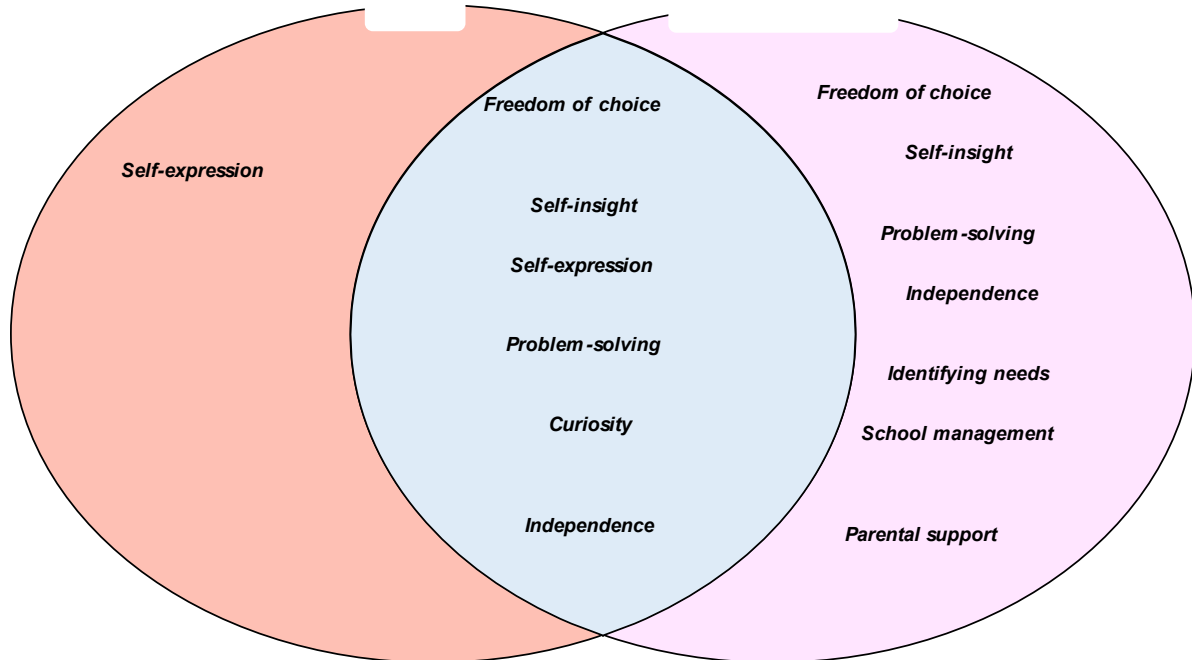
Research Question 3: What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

This research question was answered by 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers (Figure 25).

A total of 30 concepts divided into 9 categories were found that Japanese and Dutch teachers were willing to implement. Of these, 14 concepts (46.7%) were common to Japan and the Netherlands. In other words, nearly half of the items that support learner autonomy wanted to be implemented by Japanese and Dutch teachers regardless of their cultural differences.

Figure 25

Comprehensive Comparison of Ideal Support for Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category. The numbers (1) to (3) indicate which of the following research methods was used to discover each category and concept: (1) five-point Likert scale questions in the questionnaire, (2) open-ended questions in the questionnaire, (3) semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers. (D:1) and (J:3) in the overlapped area are the categories or concepts found only on the Dutch or Japanese side respectively. The categories or concepts with only numbers in the overlapped area are seen in both Japan and the Netherlands.

The 14 common concepts can be classified into six categories of Admiraal et al.'s (2019) questionnaire (freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence). In addition, two categories, namely, self-expression and problem-solving, were found on the Japanese demographic with concepts that were not found on the Dutch demographic. On the contrary, the Dutch demographic has three categories that were not found in the Japanese demographic: identifying needs, school management, and parental support. None of these elements were mentioned by Japanese teachers.

Regarding the characteristics unique to Japan, the self-expression category includes English-only class and interacting with foreigners. These concepts were not stated on the Dutch demographic because Dutch elementary schools are already implementing these in English classes. Furthermore, the concept willing to communicate comes naturally to Dutch teachers because they often speak English in their daily lives. Therefore, this notion was not mentioned by Dutch teachers.

Regarding problem-solving, besides the common opinions from both demographics, the Japanese teachers responded that there were discussions in class and working together with students. These results showed that Japanese teachers were willing to work together with students to solve problems. On the contrary, the Dutch teachers only responded that they work as a facilitator/coach regarding problem-solving. Therefore, the Dutch teachers' style is to encourage the students to find a solution on their own and the teacher provides support as needed as a coach, rather than working together with students from the first stage like the Japanese teachers.

In addition, regarding the Dutch teachers' characteristics, the concepts found in the self-insight category, namely, dialogue with students and timely teacher's feedback, indicate that Dutch teachers inspire students' self-insight through dialogue. Specifically, dialogue with students is important in any activity. This is supported by Kato and Mynard (2016), quoting Brockbank and McGill's (2006) definition of the importance of dialogue, and they stated that

dialogue with others provides possibilities to reconstruct one's established assumptions and beliefs which can lead one to develop further. Therefore, through dialogue with teachers and helpful support, students can reconsider and improve their learning processes and methods, thereby correcting the trajectory of their learning. In addition, this is connected to the teacher's role as a facilitator and coach during problem-solving.

Furthermore, identifying needs, school management, and parental support were categorized as ideal support only seen by Dutch teachers. Therefore, Dutch teachers believe that to provide effective support, it is necessary to accurately grasp the needs of students, and for this purpose, early English education should be conducted in small classes and more English lessons should be conducted than what is currently available.

On the contrary, in Japan, there is still an argument that early English education is unnecessary. Sugino (2023) summarized the following opinions against early English education: the concerns about a decline in children's Japanese language proficiency, the increased burden on teachers (Otsu & Watari, 2021; Terasawa, 2014), the growing disparity in English, and the accelerating dislike of English (Erikawa, 2017). Roux (2016) conducted a questionnaire survey of elementary teachers in a teacher training program in Saga Prefecture (n = 23). He found that 28% of Japanese teachers responded they were unsure about how to teach English and 23% responded they were unsure about what to teach. Such negative

attitudes of Japanese teachers toward English education in elementary schools could potentially stimulate a dislike for English among students.

In the Netherlands, earlier English education is ideal, and it is considered to be successful in teaching EFL. Therefore, those who oppose early English education in Japan need to consider how to achieve a successful English education and need to implement approaches to English education that can address their concerns.

A total of 14 common concepts, divided into 6 categories, that support learner autonomy were found in both demographics; hence, it is necessary to start from the practical ones. For instance, speech activity in the category self-expression and less teacher intervention and research project in the category of independence can be implemented in a student-centered classroom. Section 5.4 presents specific suggestions for teachers.

5.1.4 Comparison of Obstacles to Learner Autonomy between Japanese and Dutch

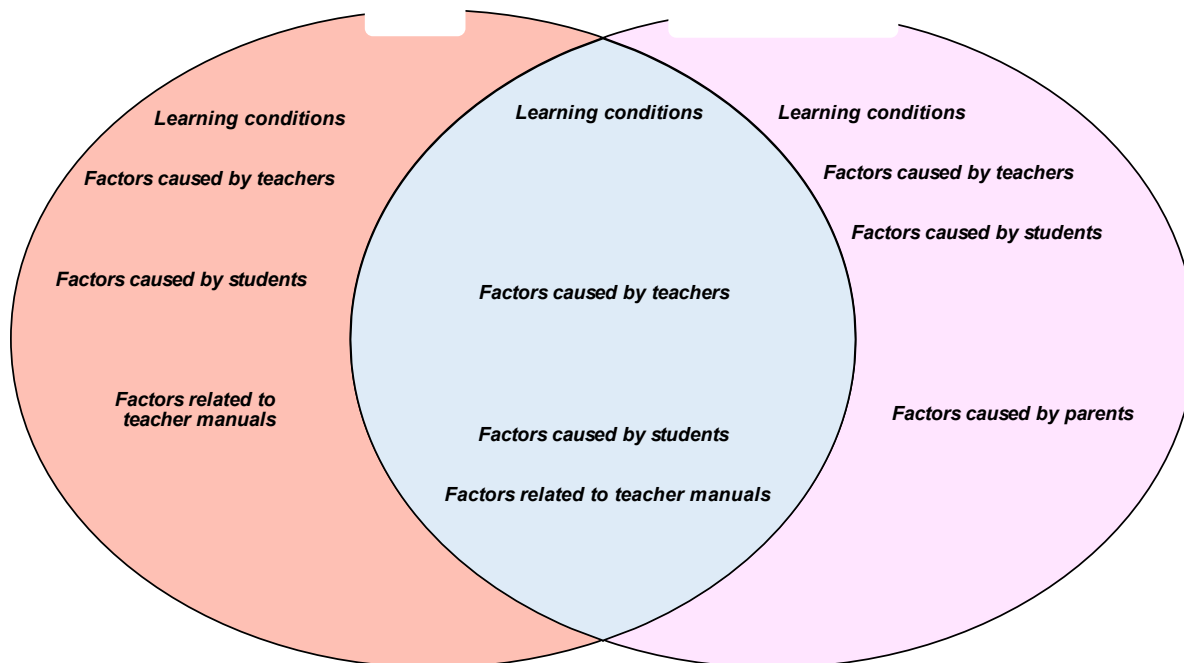
Teachers

Research Question 4: How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

This was answered by open-ended questions of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and textbook and teacher manual analysis (see Figure 26).

Figure 26

Comprehensive Comparison of Hindrances to Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category. The numbers (2) to (4) indicate which of the following research methods was used to discover each category and concept: (2) open-ended questions in the questionnaire, (3) semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and (4) textbook and teacher manual analysis. (D:3) and (J:3) in the overlapped area are the concepts found only on the Dutch or Japanese side respectively. The concepts with only numbers in the overlapped area are seen in both Japan and the Netherlands.

A total of 35 concepts were found, of which 11 were unique to Japan, 14 were common between Japan and the Netherlands, and 10 were unique to the Netherlands. That is to say, 40% of the factors that Japanese and Dutch teachers perceived as hindrances to student autonomy are common. Different from the previous three research questions, the concepts that impede the development of students' autonomy were classified into five categories: learning conditions, factors caused by teachers, factors caused by students, factors related to teacher manuals, and factors caused by parents.

With respect to the learning conditions, seven concepts were in the converged zone and one each for both demographics. In the converged area, three more categories were indicated: factors caused by teachers, factors caused by students, and factors related to teacher manuals. The Japanese demographic had the same four categories, and the Dutch demographic had one different category named factors caused by parents.

Regarding the learning conditions, teachers in Japan and the Netherlands indicated common problems such as the large number of students per class (each class has 25–30 students in both countries), less English classes, an inadequate English learning environment, shortage of teachers, lack of curriculum, and predetermined learning methods. Regarding the predetermined learning method, one of each country's teachers mentioned that they did not have the means to alter English lessons owing to the fixed learning contents in textbooks or learning methods. Therefore, students did not have an opportunity to choose their own way of learning, resulting in restricted autonomous learning. According to Edsall (2020):

Our ability to achieve educational progress may be hindered by a predetermined restriction on how we attempt to achieve learning. Thus, learner autonomy may be prevented by restricting it to only the human rights of the individual without any regard for different social contexts, where inequality might act to prevent student agency and progress for example. (p. 10)

Therefore, Japanese and Dutch teachers need to consider the social contexts of their countries and implement methods that suit the needs of their students and support learner autonomy.

Regarding insufficient teaching skills in the converged area, this is not only limited to English teaching skills but also classroom management by teachers, especially the less experienced ones. On the contrary, Japanese teachers stated teacher's lack of confidence in the category of factors caused by teachers, which are not found on the Dutch demographic. This is because in Dutch elementary schools "teachers' level of English should also at least be intermediate: for speaking, listening and reading it should be at B2-level of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages" (Goriot & van Hout, 2023, p. 499); however, there is no such requirement in Japan. Therefore, some Japanese teachers teach English even if their English proficiency has not reached a certain level. Consequently, they teach without confidence, and because they cannot understand English as required, they end up losing confidence even further, creating a vicious cycle.

On the contrary, in the Netherlands, English is a compulsory subject for fifth and sixth graders since 1986, and teachers have been participating in the 10-week, 40-hour teacher training program since then (Koster, 1986). While in Japan, English has just become a compulsory subject in 2020 for the same grade levels as their Dutch counterparts. Therefore, the difference in English level proficiency between Japanese and Dutch elementary teachers,

as well as the differences in their confidence levels in teaching English classes, is proportional to the length of the history of English education.

From Roux's (2016) survey of Japanese elementary English education teachers (n = 23), he concluded the following: "a self-perceived lack of training/experience, lack of confidence, lack of skills and a lack of English language ability are key elements in understanding teacher's anxiety and possible resistance in relation to the proposed reforms" (p. 133). The lack of confidence in teaching English owing to the lack of English proficiency among Japanese elementary teachers may lead to a decrease in students' motivation to learn. In fact, students' low motivation in learning and low self-esteem were found on the Japanese demographic in the category of factors caused by students. In this regard, Roux suggested the following—"improve teachers' English language ability: Given the goals of the English education reform, communicative skill (as opposed to receptive skills) are needed most" (p. 135).

Japanese teachers did not receive English education in elementary school because English education in Japan did not begin until 2011 (see Section 1.3.1.2). Furthermore, they have received minimal English education emphasizing communication from junior high school to university. As a result, Japanese teachers may struggle to conduct English classes to develop communication skills, despite understanding the importance emphasized by MEXT (2014). However, Japanese teachers could improve their English proficiency by utilizing

modern learning resources, such as YouTube video lessons, English learning applications, and online English lessons. Additionally, by sharing their English learning experiences with students to increase motivation, Japanese teachers could improve their English teaching effectiveness.

Meanwhile, conflicting concepts were seen in the common part of factors caused by teachers and in the Dutch demographic of factors caused by teachers. The common section included too much teacher help; however, the section specific to the Netherlands included lack of teacher help. Therefore, even for teachers from the same country, the type of classroom support they provide depends on the individual teacher.

In addition, the category of factors caused by parents with the concepts of lack of parental support and parental pressure were only found on the Dutch demographic. This is because Dutch students take a primary school leavers attainment test at age 12 at the end of elementary school (Nuffic, 2023). According to Nuffic, this is an important exam for parents to decide on the student's future education according to the teacher's advice. Comparing this to the regional situation in which most Japanese children enter local public junior high schools without taking any exams in Shimane Prefecture, it is reasonable for Dutch teachers to feel pressure from parents. On the contrary, the Japanese teachers did not mention any factors related to parents, which can be perceived that Japanese teachers do not regard the importance of parents' involvement in their children's English learning at home.

Regarding the category of factors related to teacher manuals, the converged section had no freedom of choice for planning/selecting resources/selecting strategies. However, in the second research question, the concept of selecting learning strategies was found in the efforts of teachers in Japan and the Netherlands to foster student autonomy. Therefore, some teachers encourage students to choose their own learning strategies even without instructions in the teacher's manual.

Three concepts were found only on the Japanese demographic: no freedom of choice for setting goals, no opportunity for monitoring progress, and no opportunity for assessment and revision. These elements are actions that happen in the preparation stage, middle stage, and final stage of the lesson, respectively, and if the Japanese students are not involved in them, they will not be able to develop their autonomy. As long as Dutch students are involved in these stages, their learner autonomy will develop, resulting in a wide gap in learner autonomy of these countries.

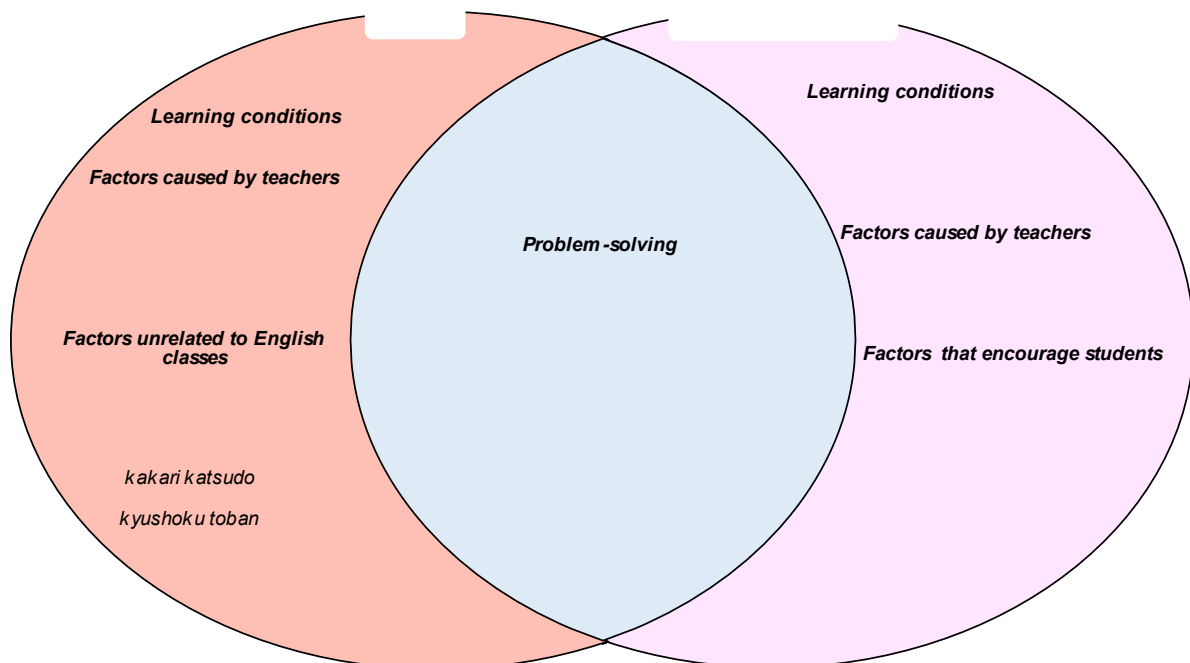
5.1.5 Comparison of Cultural Influences on Learner Autonomy between Japanese and Dutch Teachers

Research Question 5: How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

This research question was answered by open-ended questions of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and textbook and teacher manual analysis (Figure 27).

Figure 27

Comprehensive Comparison of Cultural Influences on Learner Autonomy



Note. Each bold word is a category, and the concepts are divided into each category. The numbers (2) to (4) indicate which of the following research methods was used to discover each category and concept: (2) open-ended questions in the questionnaire, (3) semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Dutch teachers, and (4) textbook and teacher manual analysis. (J:3) and (J:4) in the overlapped area are concepts found only on the Japanese side. The concept with only number in the overlapped area is seen in both Japan and the Netherlands.

Figure 27 presents 29 concepts classified into 5 categories. The only common cultural factor between Japan and the Netherlands that influences students' autonomy was collaborative group work in the problem-solving category. That is to say, the common cultural factor between Japan and the Netherlands was only 3.4%.

The Japanese and Dutch demographics each have categories named learning conditions and factors caused by teachers, respectively. On the Japanese demographic, one concept was found under the category of learning conditions, and on the Dutch demographic, four concepts were found under the same category. Regarding factors caused by teachers, six and three concepts were found on the Japanese and Dutch demographic, respectively.

The category called factors unrelated to English classes with six concepts was only found on the Japanese demographic. Although these were not directly related to English education, they were important elements in fostering student autonomy in Japanese elementary education. On the contrary, the category named factors that encourage students with eight concepts was only found on the Dutch demographic.

Regarding the importance of collaborative group work in the category of problem-solving in the converged area, Imai (2011) stated the following:

The group must be made up of members from diverse backgrounds. You may think that the instruction and support will be one-sided if the English proficiency of the group members is not the same, cooperative learning will not be possible. But, this is not the case. The diversity of members encourages collaboration, and the focus of the activities themselves is not just on learning English knowledge. (p. 3, author translation)

Therefore, when introducing group activities, teachers should emphasize that even though individual students have different educational or English proficiency backgrounds, they can solve problems by exchanging opinions and helping each other owing to their different ways of thinking. The teacher's role is to successfully facilitate such activities.

Nevertheless, Japanese teachers responded the following to the open-ended questionnaire regarding cultural influences: simultaneous instruction, teacher-centered classroom, and consolidation into one answer. Therefore, regardless of group work, if the teacher consolidates the group's opinions into one, individual opinions are not respected. This teacher's action against learner autonomy is an example of a strong collective consciousness of the Japanese people. On the contrary, Dutch teachers did not mention consolidation into one answer; rather, they respect the individual opinions of students. In addition, even though the concept name is the same as collaborative group work, the underlying awareness of Japanese and Dutch teachers are different.

Moreover, on the Dutch demographic, three concepts were found in the category of factors caused by teachers: student-centered, dialogue between teachers and students, and frequent feedback from teachers. Therefore, Dutch teachers place students at the center of learning and guide them in problem-solving through a dialogue, which is recognized by teachers as a cultural background that leads students to be autonomous learners.

The Japanese teachers stated aspects that were not directly related to English classes as factors related to fostering student autonomy: regular classroom meetings, sports day, engagement activities (*kakari katsudo*), lunch duty (*kyushoku toban*), and one homeroom teacher system. Specifically, in sports day, engagement activities (*kakari katsudo*), and lunch duty (*kyushoku toban*), students have the opportunity to acquire autonomy through individual responsibility and cooperation with their classmates. MEXT (2022) explained in their YouTube channel that *kakari katsudo* is “activities we [children] set for ourselves to make [the] class even more fun” and *toban* tasks are “tasks that are shared among students as the tasks need to be done.” In either case, since students are required to think and act on their own, these actions can lead to the development of student autonomy.

On the contrary, Dutch teachers consider the following concepts in the category of factors that encourage students to be important: project work without textbooks and use English outside of school. Japanese teachers consider these practices to be ideal for fostering student autonomy, but they state them as their ideal support. On the contrary, Dutch teachers recognize these practices as a part of their own culture to foster learner autonomy.

Regarding teacher manuals, the Dutch teacher manuals for third and fourth graders contain setting goals that were not included in the Japanese teacher manuals. Regarding setting goals, the teacher manual of *Groove Me* instructs the teacher to discuss with students

what they will learn in the unit. This action leads to abundant interaction between the teacher and students.

Regarding the concept of theme learning in the category of learning conditions, cross-curricular learning, such as the *All-in-1* Dutch textbook, is not implemented in Japan; therefore, learning English as part of other learning themes is something that Japanese students do not normally experience, and linking it to other subjects increases students' motivation. Furthermore, bilingual education was a remarkable feature of the Dutch educational setting, whereas Japanese students need more time to immerse in English. These factors are the reasons why Dutch students have higher English proficiency than their Japanese counterparts.

5.2 Summative Conclusions

The questionnaire survey results revealed that Admiraal et al.'s (2019) six aspects of autonomy (freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence) were recognized by teachers in both countries as defining autonomy. Regarding the 5-point Likert scale questions, independence was the most closely perceived by teachers in both countries, followed by curiosity. There were significant differences between the two countries regarding the other four aspects, with the Japanese teachers having lower perceptions than their Dutch counterparts. However, the results of the open-ended

questions and semi-structured interviews revealed that both Japanese and Dutch teachers recognized all six aspects of learner autonomy.

Japanese and Dutch teachers were implementing these aspects in their classes, in common ways and in their own ways. Furthermore, these teachers had a wealth of ideas for developing these aspects in a variety of ways.

However, Dutch teachers responded to the need for support from parents to foster students' autonomy, which is not the case for their Japanese counterparts. This can be attributed to the fact that in Dutch culture, parents, teachers, and school boards have equal authority to be involved in their children's education (Hooge, 2017). On the contrary, the educational setting in Japan dates back to the Edo period, in *Terakoya*, the predecessors of modern elementary schools, in which teachers were called masters and teachers and students had a hierarchical relationship (MEXT, 2009b). Therefore, parents rely on teachers and entrust their children's education to them.

The efforts that teachers in Japan and the Netherlands are implementing from the perspective of fostering student autonomy involve the concepts of identifying needs and selecting learning strategies proposed by Reinders (2010). These are implemented to give students freedom of choice, thereby increasing their motivation. However, it was contradictory that Japanese and Dutch teachers stated teacher-dependent class and textbook-dependent class as factors that interfere with student autonomy. Furthermore, Japanese

teachers stated that they are conducting simultaneous instruction and consolidation into one answer as Japanese cultural elements, which were contrary to the promotion of learner autonomy.

Through the present research, it was found that the Dutch teachers emphasized the term responsibility in their students' learning. Even though it is the keyword of the definition of learner autonomy as the researcher has discussed in this study, it did not appear in the remarks of the Japanese teachers. Therefore, whether learners are engaged in learning English as their own responsibility is an important factor in students' successful English learning.

In addition, Dutch teachers facilitate as a coach for students to become successful autonomous learners because Dörnyei (2009) argued that the success of the future self-guides depends on the teacher as a coach and learners' vision. However, Japanese teachers did not state the concept of a coach advocated by Dutch teachers. This is related to the difference in perception between Dutch teachers who perceive the relationship between teachers and students as equal and Japanese teachers who perceive the teacher to be leading the class. Hence, if classes proceed under teacher's direction and students have to obediently follow them, students' opportunities for self-expression are psychologically hindered. On the contrary, a class environment where students can comfortably express their opinions to the teacher encourages students to engage in class more assertively.

However, a Dutch teacher suggested that through meaningful conversation with teachers, students become aware of the purpose and method of their learning, and then they can be led to learn more autonomously. Palfreyman (2003) quoted Cotterall's (1995) analysis that teachers' roles in a classroom are teacher feedback, self-monitoring, risk-taking, and self-confidence. Therefore, students need to be independent learners through dialogue with the teacher, rather than being involved in one-sided lessons from teachers.

Mynard (2018) claimed that "one of the most significant ways that educators can support language learners is through dialogue" (p. 26). In addition, Mynard suggested the means of how teachers can facilitate students to become responsible learners through reflective dialogue as follows:

We can engage them in dialogue when they are making a learning plan, choosing resources and strategies, implementing a plan of study, evaluating their progress, finding opportunities to collaborate with others, or regulating their motivational and affective states. It is helpful to consider the degree of awareness that learners have about their own learning when deciding how best to support them. (p. 27)

Therefore, teachers need to make students aware of their own progress in learning English through dialogue at each stage of the lesson. At that time, teachers must be careful of their words when giving feedbacks even if a student's progress is slow. Nagakura (2023) created a checklist for teachers to practice English classes that emphasize humanity. One of the

checklist items is “talk to a student warmly you need to observe carefully and encourage them to learn from each other” (p. 161, author translation). When teachers do this, it is meaningful for students to understand what they have completed and have not achieved yet and to guide them to find the next challenge on their own.

However, another serious problem is that some Japanese teachers teach English without confidence in their ability to manage the class or their own English skills, even though these statements might simply reflect the humble nature of the Japanese people. If this happens, it will discourage the students and hinder their ability to improve their English skills. On the contrary, Dutch teachers did not have the same issue regarding the lack of self-confidence. Even if the teacher’s English proficiency does not reach CEFR B2 level required for Dutch elementary teachers, showing students that the teacher is speaking in English confidently will encourage them to express themselves more in English.

5.3 Recommendations for those Engaged in English Education

This section presents the recommendations to the Japanese and Dutch ministries of education (MEXT and OCW, respectively), textbook developers, and education trainers for elementary teachers from the viewpoint of supporting the development of learner autonomy.

In Japan and the Netherlands, curricula are created and the textbooks used are developed to achieve the objectives set by MEXT and OCW, respectively. In Japan, MEXT

created *Let's Try!* and authorized *New Horizon*. In the Netherlands, although there is no government test for textbooks like in Japan, textbooks are used under the authority of each school.

Some teachers in the Netherlands do not use textbooks; however, there are teachers who depend on textbooks because they do not have much time for lesson planning and cannot develop their own teaching materials. Therefore, if the textbooks have contents that promote autonomy and the teacher manuals guide how to use the textbooks, teachers can efficiently support the development of autonomy without spending time on lesson study.

Japanese teachers especially had the tendency to follow the textbooks owing to their diligent temperament. Therefore, if there are instructions in textbooks and teacher manuals about how to support the development of learner autonomy (e.g., deciding on goal setting or learning strategies through dialogue with students), teachers are likely to follow those instructions faithfully.

The teacher manuals of *Groove Me*, used for third and fourth graders in the Netherlands, were the only ones that included an element of learner autonomy development in the following stages: setting goals, monitoring progress, and assessment and revision. Regarding planning learning, selecting resources, and selecting learning strategies, none of the teacher manuals of both demographics examined in this research showed elements that foster autonomy support. Therefore, if the MEXT and OCW focus on these elements when

creating a curriculum, if textbook developers incorporate activities that involve students in these stages, and if training sessions for teachers were conducted, then teachers could effectively support and foster the development of students' autonomy.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications for Teachers

To develop students' autonomy, teachers need to involve students in every stage of the lessons, such as Reinders' (2010) eight stages of autonomy development (i.e., identifying needs, setting goals, planning learning, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, practice, monitoring progress, and assessment and revision) while interacting with students and exchanging questions and answers. By doing so, students can find the direction for their lesson goals. The following ideas at each stage are suggested to Japanese and Dutch teachers:

1. Identifying needs: Interact with students in a way that draws their interest by connecting the unit goals to the students' daily lives.
2. Setting goals: The general goals for the lesson will be shared with the class, and each student will set individual goals on the basis of their English proficiency level.
3. Planning learning: When presenting the flow of the day's lessons to the class, the teacher asks the students to think and decide the order in which the lesson goals for that day can be achieved.

4. Selecting resources: Allow students to choose from multiple available resources.

Moreover, ask students why they chose that resource and provide encouraging comments.
5. Selecting learning strategies: Have students choose a strategy to accomplish the day's goals. Give examples or hints where appropriate, if necessary. Moreover, ask students why they chose a particular strategy and provide motivational comments.
6. Practice: Tell them not to be afraid of making mistakes in English and taking on challenges. During the activity, when students need to decide on the order of speaking, encourage them to communicate using English expressions rather than a rock-paper-scissors battle such as "go ahead" or "after you." If there are students who do not actively participate in activities, explain that in English-speaking countries, self-assertion, self-promotion, and participation with a volunteer spirit are important.
7. Monitoring progress: Observe students' activities and ask questions for midterm evaluations. If necessary, ask students if they need to change their plans to reach their goals.

8. Assessment and revision: Give students time to reflect after each lesson and mention what they did well, what they did not do, and what they need to revise or improve on their plans.

There are effective ways for teachers to interact with students while they implement the above suggestions. In addition, Kato and Mynard (2016) suggested that teachers can do the dialogue using powerful questions with their students. According to them, the most powerful questions start with “why,” followed by “how,” “what,” “who,” “when,” “where,” and then “which” and “yes/no questions.” Therefore, if a Japanese teacher is not used to a teaching style that emphasizes dialogue with students, they may start with “which” and “yes/no questions,” which are less powerful, and gradually use “who,” “when,” “where,” and “what” questions. Then, it will be effective to connect it to “how” and then “why,” which are more powerful questions.

Moreover, it is vital that teachers never impose their opinions to the students. When something does not work well, ask questions for students themselves to realize what the problem is. Kato and Mynard (2016) suggested the following:

Revising goals and plans is an important process for the learners to make the original plan into a more realistic one. However, it is not the advisor’s role to point out that the original plan is not working well. Your role is to help the learner realize what is working well and what is not, and guide them through how to reorganize it. (p. 122)

Therefore, it is important to choose words that encourage awareness so that students can successfully modify their learning direction to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, peer interaction is effective in motivating students to learn by allowing them to share their opinions and ideas. McLoughlin (2020) claimed that “support from peers, learning advisors, and teachers can help some learners move from a situation where interest is triggered to one where they are able to generate their own interest and remain motivated” (p. 73). Therefore, not only teachers but also classmates can support each other to maintain their motivation. Peeters (2020) stated that “while the ways in which scaffolded support is provided and how it takes shape in a language learning environment differ from classroom to classroom, there are some features that are essential when aiming to use scaffolding techniques effectively” (p. 120). Therefore, teachers must implement scaffolding methods that best suit their students’ needs so that Japanese classrooms are adapted to the Japanese context and Dutch classrooms are adapted to the Dutch context.

Some Japanese teachers indeed feel inferior owing to their lack of confidence in their English skills. In addition, the lack of self-confidence owing to a short teaching experience is one of the factors that hinder their ability to nurture students’ autonomy. This can lead to reliance on textbooks. Therefore, teachers can learn from classroom observation or use human resources outside the school to deepen students’ interest and lead them to autonomous learning. In other words, it is possible for teachers even at the same school to share their

challenges and efforts, depending on how the teachers devise their ideas, to conduct more fruitful lessons that foster learner autonomy.

Japanese elementary schools have one homeroom teacher in each classroom, and assuming that the homeroom teacher fully understands the characteristics of each student, deep conversation between the homeroom teacher and students is beneficial in supporting students to achieve their learning goals. On the contrary, the Netherlands has a system of multiple classroom teachers, which is a useful system because teachers can notice various aspects and challenges of their students and provide feedback from different perspectives.

Regardless, in Japan and the Netherlands, it is important to support students' autonomy while taking advantage of the characteristics of each class management system.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Summary

The Japanese and Dutch governments had addressed that learner autonomy is important for children to learn EFL. Students themselves should be at the center of their learning; hence, they need to be autonomous learners and teachers need to develop their autonomy. However, there is a wide gap in students' English proficiency between these countries. Therefore, this study investigated how elementary teachers in Japan and the Netherlands perceive and support their students' autonomy. The study participants were English teachers of third to sixth graders in elementary schools in Japan and the Netherlands. These demographics were chosen because, in both countries, English education is compulsory from third grade onward.

To examine Japanese and Dutch teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy in the context of each country, the following five research questions were answered:

1. What views do elementary school teachers have regarding learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
2. In what ways do the teachers support the development of autonomy in their students in Japan and the Netherlands?
3. What recommendations do teachers provide to better support the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

4. How aware are the teachers of the obstacles that may impede the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?
5. How do cultural factors affect the development of learner autonomy in Japan and the Netherlands?

To answer these research questions, a mixed research method was used—which was a questionnaire survey consisting of a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions to 61 Japanese and 61 Dutch elementary school teachers—semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with five Japanese elementary school teachers and via Zoom with five Dutch elementary school teachers as part of a qualitative study, and English textbooks and teacher manuals for third to sixth graders in Japan and the Netherlands were analyzed.

Regarding the data analysis method, multiple regression analysis was conducted after confirmatory factor analysis for the responses of the 5-point Likert scale questions. The responses of the open-ended questions were analyzed using KH Coder and GTA, and the teachers' unambiguous responses were divided into concepts and further categorized. Moreover, the responses of the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using M-GTA. Worksheets were created for each category of teachers' responses, and the categories were further visualized in a diagram for each country. As for the textbooks and teacher manuals, they were analyzed by creating a checklist that combined Reeve's (2016) three critical

motivational stages in the context of autonomy-supportive teaching and Reinders' (2010) eight elements of learner autonomy.

This study found that Japanese and Dutch elementary teachers perceived the same categories of learner autonomy that Admiraal et al. (2019) found in their research that targeted Dutch teachers (i.e., freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, problem-solving, curiosity, and independence). Although significant differences were found between the two countries for freedom of choice, self-insight, self-expression, and problem-solving, the other two categories of independence and curiosity indicated that Japanese and Dutch teachers perceived that these aspects were important based on their responses to the 5-point Likert scale questions. On the contrary, in addition to the six categories, Japanese teachers emphasized that two more categories, namely, freedom of choice and self-insight, were important, while Dutch teachers emphasized students' responsibility in learning because being independent learners is important. These aspects were based on their responses to the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews.

In fact, Japanese and Dutch teachers were implementing those aspects of teacher support in their English lessons. For instance, Japanese teachers compliment students to increase their self-esteem. However, Dutch teachers facilitate their students' learning as coaches. Furthermore, there was a difference between Japan and the Netherlands regarding the content of ideal learner autonomy development support that teachers would like to engage

in. While Japanese teachers expressed a preference for English-only classes, the Dutch teachers expressed the need for parents' support in learning at home. In the Netherlands, some English classes are already taught in English. However, this difference could be attributed to the cultural background in Japanese elementary schools, where parents leave their children's education to the school and do not get involved. The common feature is that teachers from both countries want to incorporate freedom of choice by having students set their own goals and create study plans.

However, in reality, there were challenges as well such as insufficient teaching skills, which results in teacher-dependent or textbook-dependent classes, or teaching all English levels of students at once. The teachers in both countries stated that this was attributed to a shortage of teachers and few English classes.

Other characteristics that should be considered as obstacles to support students' autonomy development were as follows: Japanese teachers stated they lack confidence in their English skills and the Dutch teachers expressed the lack of support and lot of pressure from parents. However, Japanese teachers' self-proclaimed lack of confidence might be attributed to the humble nature of Japanese people. Regarding the parental pressure on the Dutch teachers, it was attributed to the fact that the Dutch government strengthened the importance of the autonomy of the three parties: teachers, parents, and school management.

Finally, regarding cultural factors in Japan and the Netherlands that affect student autonomy, Japan fosters autonomy through sports day and engagement activities (*kakari katsudo*), while the Netherlands fosters autonomy through the implementation of theme learning or project work without textbooks. Meanwhile, collaborative group work was a common feature between Japan and the Netherlands. However, in Japan, there is a tendency for the group to consolidate answers into one answer. On the contrary, in the Netherlands, opinions of individual students through dialogue with teachers are respected and this country strives to develop students into autonomous learners.

Japanese teachers increase students' self-esteem by complimenting them; however, when teachers do not respect individual opinions, it reduces students' motivation to learn and affects their English proficiency. This fact leads to differences in English proficiency and children's satisfaction with school education between Japan and the Netherlands. Therefore, Japanese and Dutch teachers must build trusting relationships with students and conduct classes that allow students to express themselves in English through a dialogue that motivates them. The important role of teachers is to provide support for this purpose.

To remain motivated and learn English autonomously, learners must maintain an interest in the target language and learning. According to McLoughlin (2020), "Educators can create opportunities for triggering interest in learners" (p. 72). For instance, Japanese people have increased inbound demand after COVID-19, and there is a possibility that they will

interact with foreign tourists who visit Japan, or there are more opportunities to interact with the world through online platforms. As a result, children will likely become more motivated to learn English as they have increased opportunities to encounter diverse cultures.

Through autonomous participation in classes, dialogue with teachers and classmates, and frequent feedback, students are closer to achieving the goals set in the class, and if they achieve their goals, their satisfaction with the class will increase. In the case of Dutch elementary schools, the students gain self-confidence through dialogue with teachers and self-confidence leads to further challenges. This may well be the reason why the children's well-being surveys by UNICEF (2013, 2020) show good results and why they reign in English proficiency surveys worldwide. Moreover, when lessons are fun that students can enjoy, and teachers can make them feel that the lesson is valuable time for their growth, the autonomous learning of the student will continue even after graduating from elementary school.

For Japanese students to confidently express themselves in English with people from other countries in a global setting in the future, Japanese teachers should respect students' ability to express themselves confidently, which will eventually lead to improved confidence in the English language.

6.2 Limitations of this Study

In the questionnaire survey conducted on English teachers in elementary schools in Japan and the Netherlands regarding teacher autonomy support for students, the question items were adapted from Admiraal et al. (2019), which were originally developed within a European context. Therefore, these questionnaire items were difficult for Japanese teachers to respond to. In fact, I heard from Japanese English teachers who responded to the survey that answering the questionnaire was a truly arduous task. Hence, if universal questionnaire items were used, the results might have been different.

All Japanese participants were from elementary schools in Shimane Prefecture, whereas the Dutch teachers were from various elementary schools throughout the Netherlands. Therefore, if the participants from Japan included elementary teachers from other regions and private elementary schools, different views of learner autonomy among Japanese teachers might have emerged.

In addition, the number of participants in the semi-structured interviews was only five each from both countries. Therefore, there were limitations on the data gathered regarding teachers' implementations to foster autonomy. Furthermore, the affiliations of participants in Japan and the Netherlands were different, such as gender, teaching experiences, and age. Although it was difficult to find participants with completely the same affiliations for the present research, the results might have been different if that was the case.

Regarding textbook and teacher manual analysis, the number of units covered by the examined textbooks in this study differs between Japan and the Netherlands. For instance, *Let's Try! 1* and *Let's Try! 2* used by third and fourth graders in Japan contain nine units each, and *New Horizon 5* and *New Horizon 6* used by fifth and sixth graders in Japan contain eight units each. Moreover, Japanese students in grades three to six learn a total of 34 units when using these textbooks for 4 years. Therefore, Japanese students can increase their autonomy 34 times in each unit in 4 years.

On the contrary, the textbook *Groove Me* for third and fourth graders in the Netherlands contain six songs (six units). Fifth- and sixth-grade *All-in-1* deals with five themes for the year. In total, Dutch students learn 22 units if they use these textbooks for 4 years. Therefore, there are 22 opportunities to increase autonomy through textbooks. Owing to these differences in the number of units of Japanese and Dutch textbooks, it was challenging to verify student autonomy development support through textbooks under the same conditions.

According to Blink, which developed *Groove Me*, they implemented *Groove Me* at pilot elementary schools in Japan several years ago; however, for some reason, *Groove Me* was not accepted at the Japanese elementary schools. Therefore, if students in two countries were to use textbooks that are used worldwide, the verification results would be different.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

This research was conducted using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a comparison of textbooks and teacher manuals between Japan and the Netherlands and did not compare actual English classes in both the countries. However, several Dutch teachers who participated in the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews invited the researcher to observe their English classes if the researcher could physically visit their elementary schools.

Nevertheless, the researcher could not travel to the Netherlands owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and private reasons. The data collection period, which occurred from 2020 to 2022, partially extending into early 2023, coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the researcher plans to continue the research by observing teachers' practical efforts to foster learner autonomy in their English classes in the future in Japan and the Netherlands. It will be a more persuasive research.

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Appendix A

Teacher Questionnaire Autonomy Support to Japanese and Dutch Teachers

To Japanese teachers:

教員アンケートご協力をお願い（対象:小学校外国語活動/外国語ご担当の先生）

児童の自律性の育成は、英語習得のための大切な要因の一つであると考えております。このアンケートでは、ご回答者様の外国語活動または外国語の授業で、児童の自律性を促進するためにどのようなご支援をされているかお答えいただきたく存じます。ご回答時間は約 10 分間です。お忙しいところ恐れ入りますが、ご協力いただけますと大変幸甚に存じます。

セクション 1：選択式

最初に、ご回答者様ご自身のことについて教えてください。

- ・今年度、ご回答者様は何年生のクラスを担当されていますか。

3年生の担任、4年生の担任、5年生の担任、6年生の担任、外国語専科、その他

- ・性別を教えてください。

男性、女性、無回答

- ・ご回答者様は英語を教えて何年になりますか。

1～5年、6～10年、11～15年、16年以上

セクション 2：選択式

ご回答者様の英語の授業について、各質問に以下の 1 から 5 のいずれかでお答えください。

1=(ほとんど)まったくそうではない 2=時々そうである 3=結構そうである 4=かなり頻繁にそうである
5=(ほとんど)いつもそうである。

1. 児童は、英語活動の際、活動をひとりで行くかクラスメートと行くか選択することができる。
2. 児童は、一つの課題を終えたら次にすることを自分で決めることができる。
3. 児童は、活動の順番を自分で選択することができる。
4. 児童は、使う教材を自分で選択することができる。
5. 児童は、一つの活動にかかる時間を自分で決めることができる。
6. 児童は、活動する場所を自分で選択することができる（例：教室内のどこで行うか）。
7. 児童は、学びたいことを自分で決めることができる。
8. 児童は、指示された活動に参加するかどうか選択することができる。
9. 私は、児童が上手くできていることについて児童と話し合っている。
10. 私は、児童が難しいと感じるだろうことについて児童と話し合っている。
11. 私は、児童がする活動について児童と話し合っている。
12. 私は、児童になぜそれをしなければならないか理由を説明している。
13. 私は、児童が作成する成果物について児童と話し合っている。

14. 私は、児童が何か始める前にまず考えさせている。
15. 児童は、活動をする際、その活動の目的を児童自身が説明できる。
16. 児童は、自分の考えや気持ちを伝えることができる。
17. 児童は、何かをしたくない場合、自分の意思を言うことができる。
18. 児童は、自分の考えや練習したことをグループに発表することができる。
19. 児童は、他者と意見が違ってても自分の意見を発表することができる。
20. 私は児童に意見を聞いている。
21. 私は、児童が間違えることは問題ないと思っている。
22. 私は、児童が何か失敗しても、子ども達自身で解決策を見つけることができると思っている。
23. 児童は、何か分からないことがあればクラスメートに助けを求めている。
24. 児童は、活動中話し合うことができる。
25. 教師と児童と一緒に問題の解決策を見つけている。
26. もし私が答えが分からない時は、児童と一緒に答えを探している。
27. 私は、児童は自分たち自身で疑問を解決しようとしなければならないと思っている。
28. 私は、児童が好奇心を持つように努めている。
29. 私は、児童の興味をひくものがたくさんあると確信している。
30. 児童は、自分が面白いと思うことを学ぶことができる。
31. 私は、児童の興味を考慮している。
32. 私は、色々な手法で教えるように努めている。
33. 私は、児童の心をつかむような方法で話をするように努めている。
34. 児童は、必要な物をすぐに見つけることができる（例：活動で使用する筆記用具等）。
35. 私は、児童に自律して活動させるように努めている。
36. 私は、児童が(クラスメート等から)妨害されることなく集中して活動できるように努めている。
37. 何がどこにあるかはっきりしている（例：タブレット、教科書など）。
38. 私は、児童が授業中にすることを明確にしようと努めている。
39. 児童は、活動を自分たち自身で行うことができる。

セクション3：記述式

より深い洞察のため、ご回答者様のご意見を自由にご記入ください。

40. 「学習者の自律性」をどのように定義しますか。
 41. ご回答者様は、児童の自律性をどのように促進しようと努めていますか。
 42. 理想的な状況下で、児童の自律性を促進するとしたら何をしたいですか。
 43. 児童が自律的に学習することが妨げられているとすれば、原因は何だと思いますか。
 44. ご回答者様のクラスで児童の自律性育成のために実施されていることで、日本独自だと思われることがありますか？
- ご記入いただいた内容（ご回答者様の英語の授業での取り組み）について、Zoom または対面インタビューでさらに詳しくお話を聞かせていただける場合は、以下にご回答者様のお名前とメールアドレスをご記入ください。

To Dutch teachers:

Teacher Questionnaire for Teachers Teaching English in an Elementary School

Teachers' autonomy support may be one of the most important factors for students to succeed in learning English. In this questionnaire survey, please answer questions about your support for developing autonomous learners in your English classroom. It will take about 10 minutes to answer. I would really appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this survey. Thank you very much.

Section 1: Selective Questions

- What grade do you teach in English? Group 5, Group 6, Group 7, Group 8, others
- Please, tell me your gender. Male, Female, Prefer not to say
- How long have you been teaching English? 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, more than 16 years

Section 2: Selective Questions

In this section, please answer about autonomous learning support for your students in your English classes. Please choose the answer from 1 to 5.

1=(almost) Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Quite often, 4=Very often, and 5=(almost) Always.

1. My students can choose to do their work individually or together.
2. My students can decide what to do next when they have completed an assignment.
3. My students can choose the sequence in which they do their work.
4. My students can choose which materials they use.
5. My students can decide how long they work on a task.
6. My students can choose where they work.
7. My students can decide what they want to learn.
8. My students can choose whether to participate in the instructional activities.
9. I discuss with my students what they can do well.
10. I discuss with my students what they find difficult.
11. I discuss their work with my students.
12. I explain why my students have to do something.
13. I discuss school reports or portfolios with my students.
14. I let students think first before they start doing something.
15. My students are allowed to explain why they do something in a certain way.
16. My students are allowed to tell what they think and feel.
17. My students are allowed to say "no" if they don't want to do something.
18. My students can present their work to the group.

19. My students can speak out if they have a different opinion from others.
20. I ask my students for their opinion.
21. It's okay to make mistakes.
22. My students can come up with solutions themselves if something fails.
23. My students ask classmates for help if they don't know something.
24. My students are allowed to discuss while working.
25. Together we come up with solutions to problems.
26. We look together for an answer if I don't know an answer.
27. My students must try to solve their questions themselves.
28. I try to make my students curious.
29. I ensure that there is much to be found that interests my students.
30. My students can learn the things that they find interesting.
31. I take into account the interests of my students.
32. I try to provide variety in teaching forms.
33. I try to tell (about the lesson content of the day) in a captivating way.
34. My students can find something easily (in the classroom) when they need it.
35. I try to get my students to work independently.
36. I try to let my students work undisturbed.
37. It is clear where everything is.
38. I try to be clear about what my students should do in class.
39. My students can do things themselves.

Section 3: Open-Ended Questions

Please write your opinions for deeper insight.

40. How would you define learner autonomy?
 41. In what ways do you try to promote the autonomy of the students in your class?
 42. In the ideal situation, what would you like to do differently in order to promote the autonomy of your students?
 43. What do you think might hinder the development of learner autonomy?
 44. Is there anything you do in class that you think is unique to your country in order to foster learner autonomy?
- If you can kindly have a Zoom interview with the researcher to talk about your English lesson efforts in more detail, please write your name and e-mail address.

Appendix B

Questionnaire Items Divided into Six Aspects of Learner Autonomy Advocated by Admiraal et al. (2019)

Aspect 1: Freedom of choice

1. My students can choose to do their work individually or together.
児童は、英語活動の際、活動をひとりで行うかクラスメートと行うか選択することができる。
2. My students can decide what to do next when they have completed an assignment.
児童は、一つの課題を終えたら次にすることを自分で決めることができる。
3. My students can choose the sequence in which they do their work.
児童は、活動の順番を自分で選択することができる。
4. My students can choose which materials they use.
児童は、使う教材を自分で選択することができる。
5. My students can decide how long they work on a task.
児童は、一つの活動にかかる時間を自分で決めることができる。
6. My students can choose where they work.
児童は、活動する場所を自分で選択することができる（例：教室内のどこで行うか）。
7. My students can decide what they want to learn.
児童は、学びたいことを自分で決めることができる。
8. My students can choose whether to participate in the instructional activities.
児童は、指示された活動に参加するかどうか選択することができる。

Aspect 2: Self-insight

9. I discuss with my students what they can do well.
私は、児童が上手くできていることについて児童と話し合っている。
10. I discuss with my students what they find difficult.
私は、児童が難しいと感じるだろうことについて児童と話し合っている。
11. I discuss their work with my students.
私は、児童がする活動について児童と話し合っている。
12. I explain why my students have to do something.
私は、児童になぜそれをするしなければならないか理由を説明している。
13. I discuss school reports or portfolios with my students.
私は、児童が作成する成果物について児童と話し合っている。
14. I let students think first before they start doing something.
私は、児童が何か始める前にまず考えさせている。
15. My students are allowed to explain why they do something in a certain way.
児童は、活動をする際、その活動の目的を児童自身が説明できる。

Aspect 3: Self-expression:

16. My students are allowed to tell what they think and feel.
児童は、自分の考えや気持ちを伝えることができる。
17. My students are allowed to say "no" if they don't want to do something.
児童は、何かをしたくない場合、自分の意思を言うことができる。
18. My students can present their work to the group.
児童は、自分の考えや練習したことをグループに発表することができる。
19. My students can speak out if they have a different opinion from others.
児童は、他者と意見が違ってても自分の意見を発表することができる。
20. I ask my students for their opinion.
私は児童に意見を聞いている。

Aspect 4: Problem-solving

21. It's okay to make mistakes.
私は、児童が間違えることは問題ないと思っている。
22. My students can come up with solutions themselves if something fails.
私は、児童が何か失敗しても、子ども達自身で解決策を見つけることができると思っている。
23. My students ask classmates for help if they don't know something.
児童は、何か分からないことがあればクラスメートに助けを求めている。
24. My students are allowed to discuss while working.
児童は、活動中話し合うことができる。
25. Together we come up with solutions to problems.
教師と児童と一緒に問題の解決策を見つけている。
26. We look together for an answer if I don't know an answer.
もし私が答えが分からない時は、児童と一緒に答えを探している。
27. My students must try to solve their questions themselves.
私は、児童は自分たち自身で疑問を解決しようとしなければならないと思っている。

Aspect 5: Curiosity

28. I try to make my students curious.
私は、児童が好奇心を持つように努めている。
29. I ensure that there is much to be found that interests my students.
私は、児童の興味をひくものがたくさんあると確信している。
30. My students can learn the things that they find interesting.
児童は、自分が面白いと思うことを学ぶことができる。
31. I take into account the interests of my students.
私は、児童の興味を考慮している。

32. I try to provide variety in teaching forms.

私は、色々な手法で教えるように努めている。

33. I try to tell (about the lesson content of the day) in a captivating way.

私は、児童の心をつかむような方法で話をするように努めている。

Aspect 6: Independence

34. My students can find something easily (in the classroom) when they need it.

児童は、必要な物をすぐに見つけることができる（例：活動で使用する筆記用具等）。

35. I try to get my students to work independently.

私は、児童に自律して活動させるように努めている。

36. I try to let my students work undisturbed.

私は、児童が(クラスメート等から)妨害されることなく集中して活動できるよう努めている。

37. It is clear where everything is.

何がどこにあるかはっきりしている（例：タブレット、教科書など）。

38. I try to be clear about what my students should do in class.

私は、児童が授業中にすることを明確にしようと努めている。

39. My students can do things themselves.

児童は、活動を自分たち自身で行うことができる。

Appendix C

Checklist for the Japanese and Dutch Textbooks and Teacher Manuals

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Japanese textbook include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Let's Try!</i> 1 (G3)	<i>Let's Try!</i> 2 (G4)	New Horizon 5 (G5)	<i>New Horizon 6</i> (G6)	
		Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 8 units.	Consists of 8 units.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs					
	Setting goals					
	Planning learning					
	Selecting resources					
	Selecting learning strategies					
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice					
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress					
	Assessment and revision					

Table C1. Checklist for learning stages in the Japanese textbooks

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Dutch textbook include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Groove Me</i> (G3)	<i>Groove Me</i> (G4)	<i>All-in-1, Project Europe</i> (G5)	<i>All-in-1, Project Modern History</i> (G6)	
		Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 5 themes.	Consists of 5 themes.	
Pre-lesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs					
	Setting goals					
	Planning learning					
	Selecting resources					
	Selecting learning strategies					
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice					
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress					
	Assessment and revision					

Table C2. Checklist for learning stages in the Dutch textbooks

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Japanese teacher manual include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Let's Try!</i> 1, TG (G3)	<i>Let's Try!</i> 2, TG (G4)	<i>New Horizon 5,</i> TG (G5)	<i>New Horizon</i> 6, TG (G6)	
		Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 9 units.	Consists of 8 units.	Consists of 8 units.	
Prelesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs					
	Setting goals					
	Planning learning					
	Selecting resources					
	Selecting learning strategies					
Lesson Begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice					
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress					
	Assessment and revision					

Table C3. Checklist for learning stages in the Japanese teacher manuals

Motivational moments (Reeve, 2016)	Learning stages (Reinders, 2010)	Does each Dutch teacher manual include?				Information for each "Yes" item
		<i>Groove Me, HB</i> (G3)	<i>Groove Me, HB</i> (G4)	<i>All-in-1, Project Europe, HB</i> (G5)	<i>All-in-1, Project Modern History, HB</i> (G6)	
		Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 6 songs.	Consists of 5 themes.	Consists of 5 themes.	
Pre-lesson Reflection: Planning and Preparing	Identifying needs					
	Setting goals					
	Planning learning					
	Selecting resources					
	Selecting learning strategies					
Lesson begins: Inviting Students to Engage in the Learning Activity	Practice					
In-Lesson: Addressing and Solving the Problems that Arise	Monitoring progress					
	Assessment and revision					

Table C4. Checklist for learning stages in the Dutch teacher manuals

Appendix D

Analysis Worksheets for Japanese Teachers by M-GTA

JT's Analysis Worksheet 1

Concept	Self problem-solving skills
Definition	By asking questions from the teacher, students set a question, plan to solve it, and think about it by themselves.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: When I thought about what kind of skills children will need in the future, I thought it might be the skill to think and act on their own or to go to a higher level while talking with their peers. • JT 2: I think that self-directed learning is to actively learn by questioning whatever you are given –such as what it is, what it means, etc. • JT 3: I think learner autonomy is about independence. I think that it is important not only for the children's interests, but also for them to be able to research things on their own, plan and think for themselves, and carry out activities. • JT 3: What I am trying out is to “raise the children in the classroom.” Children start thinking by being given challenging assignments. • JT 3: I think it depends on what kind of assignment the teacher gives to the children. It's a task for children's auxiliary thinking, or it's for helping thinking. In the classroom, I make the children think by asking, “Why? Why?” All teachers do this. • JT 5: In this day and age, I think that [children] can start by deciding what they want to do, so decide what they want to do by themselves, and then they should think about how they can achieve their goals and what they should do. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 1 says as follows, it is important for teachers to grasp the student's current abilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 1: I think children actually already have the ability to learn autonomously, so I think it would be meaningless if I try to extend what children already have just because the teacher has an insufficient understanding of the student's ability. <p>Meanwhile, JT 4 says autonomy generates naturally, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think learners' autonomy is about having fun while learning. Children are saying words all of a sudden. Rather than the teacher urging them to “do it!” I think it means that the children are making a statement without realizing it.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 2

Concept	Expressing students' opinions
Definition	Since students naturally have their own opinions, teachers encourage students by providing opportunities for self-expression.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: During the foreign language class, I asked the students to introduce themselves using the words they learned at the end of the first semester. Even though the children were nervous at first after the presentation was over, many children noticed that it wasn't as hard as they thought it would be, and many of them had the feeling that the presentation wasn't as tough as they thought. • JT 1: I still want all of them to engage in class, so if possible, I would like each person to express their own thoughts and ideas. • JT 1: Not only keeping their opinions on their own tablet but also introducing them in pairs and groups, so that it leads to the promotion of expressing their opinions in the whole class. • JT 4: I think that children should be able to think of a wider range of opinions by themselves and for themselves.
Theoretical notes	<p>Teasing other children interferes with expressing opinions and independent learning, so it is necessary to respect others and not care about others. JT comments as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 1: When one of the children studies during the lunch break, his or her classmate asks him/her teasingly, "What are you doing?" I have heard this kind of conversation. If it is a place where the behavior of each person is not respected, I think that the children's actions and opinions will become narrower and narrower, so that is the case. - JT 1: I strongly feel that it may be unique to Japanese people to care about what other people think and to adapt to other people. I wonder if Japanese children can act a little more freely.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 3

Concept	Arousing students' interests
Definition	Teachers attempt to engage students with a variety of materials and resources in order to let them become interested in learning.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: I read poetry to my students several times. I also show them videos of classes from prominent practitioners to introduce such classes. I want my students to be interested in various things. • JT 2: Basically, after all, no matter how much the teacher tells the children about something, they are much more absorbed in activities when people actually show them and experience them. • JT 2: They (the farmers) invited us there (their factories) and showed us their products. Then the children were so excited like, "Wow!". Before then, I had no experience in the elementary school in the city, so I thought that such resources could encourage the children to be engaged in researching something by themselves. I learned it from this experience. • JT 2: Without saying anything from me, the children researched independently, like where those <i>Hassaku</i> are sold. One of the students reported that those <i>Hassaku</i> are sold even in a department store in Tokyo. That's why they need to learn outside of school. Learning English is exactly like that.
Theoretical notes	<p>According to JT 2, students' experiences during farm visits are directly linked to motivation for learning. On the other hand, he also said that digital devices, good textbooks, and an ALT are not sufficient for students to experience real communication in English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 2: I want to value authentic experiences. In terms of English, I'm surprised that the digital textbooks are so well made. It's easy to use, it's easy to hit the children's troubles, it's easy to solve, and it's very good material. Inevitably, rather than being a tool, it is more test-oriented, and English as a subject is regarded more. - JT 2: After all, no matter how good textbooks are used, children have difficulty in actual communication situations. - JT 2: Children normally talk with only their classmates in a classroom. Even if they have other opportunities to talk in English at school, only an ALT comes. The ALT is also becoming familiar with the students, so I really want them to have a more spicy experience.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 4

Concept	Minimal instruction
Definition	Students act spontaneously with the essential minimum instruction from the teacher.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: When the minimum necessary instruction is given to these children, I hope that the children can think about what to do next and act by themselves. • JT 1: ... there are situations we have to spend several minutes with some children who need individual support. During this time, I want other children to think to themselves about what they should do next, and act. It is in such a situation that children can think and act on their own after receiving instructions from the teacher. • JT 2: It's what we call a "small step," when I was in charge of the sixth grade classroom for the first time, I prepared an assignment and then I let the children do it by themselves. I thought they could do it in their own way freely, so I believed that it was good for the children to do it in various ways. However, in fact, it was not freedom but just throwing it at them. So many of the children did not know what they should have done. In addition, even more, advanced levels of children seemed to be stuck, too. ...I provide them something like weapons; it's better to be prepared with something like weapons by a teacher in other words, like tools, with which children can show their opinions to others. Then through this process, they choose their tools. • JT 5: Once the children decide what they want to do, I think they have the ability to think for themselves. When I give them hints, they try to do their assignments by themselves. Teachers give hints for autonomous learning, what to do, how to do research, etc., and children can think for themselves. • JT 5: Well, the current thinking in Japanese education is that (children) can have a prospect and that this will lead to support from teachers. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 5 points out persistent teacher instruction exists in Japan as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 5: ... the teacher divides up the lesson schedule by time, saying, "First do this, then do this," and proceeding on time.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 5

Concept	Comfortable learning environment
Definition	Students learn in an environment where they feel comfortable expressing their opinions while understanding the flow of a lesson.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: I want the children to feel that it is okay for them to be in this classroom, or that it is okay for them to exist here. I want to create a so-called “mental safety” and a safe environment. • JT 1: I think that the most important thing is to be able to take on challenges in the classroom with peace of mind. Even if the children have their own opinions or ideas when they are nervous some of them can express them, but others cannot. • JT 1: Even if I asked them to give a presentation with confidence, it wouldn't make much sense. I believe that each child will be able to give a presentation or show their actions only when they feel that it is safe for them to express their opinions in this class. • JT 1: It may take a while until all of them can express themselves. But I asked them to write their opinions on a tablet, send them to me, and copy them to an electronic blackboard. As much as possible, I continuously praise and encourage such students. • JT 1: ...when it comes to creating structure in class, it is also related to the lesson overview, but I think that the children will be confused if the overview is extremely different from the usual class structure. • JT 4: I think that the children have to say a correct answer, by thinking, “I have to say this,” like a junior high school class. Well, that's true, but I think they are allowed to act more freely. • JT 5: ... it would be a waste if I stop the children's thoughts at a place other than learning the foreign language unless the basics of leadership and school management were established. Therefore, I think that basic classroom management is important...I think I should take care of the flow of learning. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 4 says that students tend to be afraid to say something other than the correct answer as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 4: In my class, there are quite a lot of children who feel embarrassed because they make mistakes or don't know if their pronunciation is correct. There's also the fact that I haven't been able to convey to the children that it's okay to make mistakes. <i>Katakana</i> English would be fine.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 6

Concept	Willingness to communicate
Definition	Students need to have a communicative attitude to become familiar with English.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 2: However, I think that English is more of a communication tool. Therefore, like Mr. Degawa in “<i>Itte Q</i>” (the TV show), like him, it is no problem even if children can’t speak English well. I wonder how the children could try to communicate with others somehow. I think it would be nice to have a communication ability like him. • JT 3: Anyway, it is important for children to become familiar with English, and communication is the most important. • JT 3: In the past, at the school I visited, classes started with English conversation. It’s important to become familiar with English and get used to it. • JT 3: If mathematics is about specific things, English is about interacting with people. In other words, communication is important. • JT 4: Certainly, recently, words have come out of the children themselves, and I think it is because they acquired some familiar words.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 2 states that Japanese teachers themselves have problems with communication skills as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 2: What I thought was that school teachers weren’t very open, or that we weren’t rooted in the community. Some teachers can’t even greet local people properly. Teachers, well, we should not feel embarrassed, or not try to be nice, but I think that we should get involved with the local people much more deeply. - JT 2: However, it is difficult to have such opportunities because we normally face only children. So it’s hard to see out of school.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 7

Concept	Promoting the use of practical English
Definition	Teachers conduct classes in such a way that students can use practical English.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 3: It is important that children take action. For example, throwing a ball in the hall and playing catch. If the content of the class is something that children can enjoy while moving their bodies, they will acquire English that can be used in places other than school. It is important to be able to use it in practice, and I believe that this will lead to self-directed learning. • JT 3: When Foreign Language Activities are held in the hall, the distance between people is close, so children can enjoy it as if it were a game. That is what motivates children. • JT 3: Also, in Japanese schools, children sit at desks and in chairs. Foreign languages require interaction with people, so I would like to incorporate games that children can play with their friends. • JT 4: In fact, I hope when there is something that the children are interested in, or because ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is progressing recently, when the children look up something in English on a tablet and are curious about something, the children should be able to learn along those lines. • JT 5: First of all, children need to find out what they will learn. When they became third graders, they were exposed to a foreign language for the first time. I want them to be interested in foreign languages, and then I want them to feel like, “Wow, foreign languages are cool! I want to research this or that! I want to use foreign languages more! I want to know about foreign countries! I want to interact with foreigners!” something like that.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 4 tries to incorporate games as much as possible so that students do not feel that English is difficult.</p> <p>- JT 4: I try to teach English in a game format as much as possible. At the end of the class, I let the children play a game with the student sitting next to them. Well, I think it becomes an activity. If it is difficult, the children will end up saying, “Well, foreign languages are difficult.” 3rd grade students learn English for the first time, so I try to make sure that everyone can enjoy it as much as possible.</p>

JT's Analysis Worksheet 8

Concept	Freedom of choice for students
Definition	Develop autonomy by allowing students to freely choose tools for self-expression.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 2: I let them choose first. As for telling or presenting a way of their opinions to others, using PowerPoint might be good, writing on paper would be okay, or a poster presentation would be good, too. They can have options to choose from. If he or she uses PowerPoint, he or she can add some documents, graphs, or figures. • JT 2: I can tell them, "You have this and this tool now. Which one do you want to use?" to the children who do not know what kind of tools they have. During this process, I try as much as possible to not interrupt them. • JT 2: Then the children are getting to be able to choose which one they want to use by themselves from their experience gradually. This is the specific image of my class.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 3 points out that it is difficult to let students choose as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 3: the good thing about children is that everyone says, "I'll do it myself!" Well, even if I say, "Let's do it yourself!" it's actually difficult for the children to choose because the things they have to do after are already decided in the textbook. <p>JT 5 says there is less time to be free to choose for Japanese students as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 5: I think Japan is very rigid. ...It's important to be free. However, not only about time management, but also I think it's a Japanese style in that teachers show the children what they should do now, and what's next, and what's after that.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 9

Concept	Utilization of external resources
Definition	Students become proactive learners through interaction with people outside the classroom.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 2: Compared with a school in this city, [in the previous school] the learning environment was more open and there were many opportunities to interact with local people or invite local people in as much as possible. ... It is very important to get involved with various people, so if there is such a stimulus, children will be very autonomous, or they will actively want to learn from a sense of necessity rather than a feeling of being forced to do it. • JT 3: In order to become an international citizen, there are a few things that children need to open their eyes to the world. • JT 5: I think that it will be a good experience for children if they can interact with people from various countries. I myself have never interacted with people from many different countries, so I think it would be amazing if they had such an opportunity. • JT 5: Children should meet [foreign people] face to face as much as possible. I think that would allow children to think more deeply. • JT 1: Even within the same school, there are not many opportunities to learn about other classes. So, including myself, they should learn about various classes. • JT 1: What I did was show a teacher's class around 1970, and I told my students, "This is what they used to do in the past, but this is still important." Sometimes I show them videos like this. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 2 wants to incorporate outside-of-school activities or invite local people, but coordinating such classes requires the work of teachers as his following statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 2: However, in terms of learning activities at school, taking time for one unit was too short. Therefore, even if we invited the local people, we could not take much time to prepare in advance or to reflect afterward. <p>JT 3 pointed out there is no opportunity for the students to learn other than in a classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 3: However, the current method is bad. In this school, the classroom is the only place to learn. <p>Realistically, it seems difficult for both teachers and students to have the opportunity to observe other classes.</p>

JT's Analysis Worksheet 10

Concept	The limited English learning environment
Definition	The lack of resources and time for students to immerse in the English environment.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 2: Resources are scarce in that they can only use what has been prepared, and I feel that this inevitably narrows children's perspectives and things like that. • JT 3: I want a "tool."...In Foreign Language Activities, instead of just watching videos, children will be interested if there are actual concrete objects. Children may get bored just by arranging cards on the desk or looking at textbooks. • JT 3: I would like to use some more tools. It would be nice to have an English room where children can be immersed in a foreign language environment. • JT 3: This school has an arts and crafts room and a music room, but there is no English room. There is no teaching material, such as a sound source, that allows the ear to become accustomed to English. That's the problem. • JT 3: The goal of the MEXT is that children become familiar with foreign languages, and there are many examples in textbooks for becoming familiar with English expressions, but there are few teaching materials for the other goal, which is to become familiar with foreign cultures. • JT 3: It's not an environment where we can become familiar with English if we have classes once a week like now. We need a more intimate environment. • JT 3: But we don't have the time. We have an annual teaching plan and we have to move forward with it, don't we? I want more time to do each task more carefully.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 3 points out that the lack of color in Japanese schools affects students' motivation to learn English as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 3: Foreign schools are very colorful. But Japanese schools are grey. Then the students will not feel like studying English in a fun way. <p>MEXT (2014) suggested in the English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization that 3rd and 4th graders conduct Foreign Language Activities one to two times a week, but the reality is that they are only conducted once a week.</p>

JT's Analysis Worksheet 11

Concept	Teacher's lack of confidence
Definition	Teachers lack confidence in their own teaching and English skills.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 1: I sometimes wonder if it's good or not. Self-study notebooks are originally for children to do work on their own. But I know I shouldn't do it, but I sometimes instruct my students, "You should do two pages" or something like that, I wonder if it is truly autonomous learning. • JT 1: When a child thinks, "Oh, I want to do something today," it doesn't have to be one page, it can be half a page. The original idea is to really think for themselves, but I wonder if my instruction is necessary. • JT 5: I feel inadequate (as a teacher). I myself have no confidence in speaking English, and I have a feeling that I am not good at it. In terms of competence as a teacher, it is also necessary to increase the specialization of the subject as a foreign language. • JT 5: I wish I could use English more to support the children in various ways, but it just doesn't work out that way. Therefore, I think that the expertise and competence of teachers are important. • JT 5: Even though I can't conduct the class well even in Japanese. I think it's an issue on the teacher's side. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>Contrary to JT 5, JT 3 says that she does not feel barriers because she can manage the class as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT3: I let the children do it within the fixed plan, so if I say there are no barriers – actually, yes, there are no barriers. There is nothing in particular that hinders autonomy. Because I think by myself and practice, I just as if I were cooking something, how to prepare the teaching materials by myself. <p>While there is some hesitation about instructions, JT1 believes in the autonomy of students as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 1: ... there are four things that I am conscious of trusting, entrusting, waiting, and supporting. I want to give the children enough time to think about the class content. I always say to my students that this is not my class, it's your class. ,, If possible, I don't want to talk so much in class, and if possible, I would like to have a class where I only talk for 3 or 4 minutes.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 12

Concept	Peer cooperation
Definition	Teachers believe that the students' emphasis on collaboration with others is a result of Japanese education.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 2: I think that there are quite important roles that schools are expected to play in Japan. I believe that school education has always been the basis for the diligence and cooperativeness that Japanese people have built up over a long period. • JT 4: Japanese children tend to say "Let's try it together!" I think this is very Japanese. I think it's a good aspect of Japan, such as doing it together in pairs, and cheering when someone is presenting in a group. It means cooperation. • JT 5: I think that the meaning of autonomy is becoming broader, and I'm wondering if just being able to do something alone is enough.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 4 points out that Japanese education lacks flexibility as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 4: Because Japanese [schools] tend to let children fit into a "mold" when children study. Well, that may be a good aspect, but I thought it was different from other countries.

JT's Analysis Worksheet 13

Concept	Textbook-based classes
Definition	Teachers teach English by relying on textbooks.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JT 4: I'm doing precisely what the textbook instructs because we are forced to do it. • JT 4: On the other hand, the textbook can help me in some way because the contents the children have to learn are all in there. • JT 2: I think my problem is the feeling of being busy and the lack of resources due to not being open. I wonder if it's a hindrance, a hindrance to children's autonomy.
Theoretical notes	<p>JT 4 stated that it is easy to follow the textbook, but on the other hand, she worried that the textbook had too much content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 4: However, I think it is difficult to do things only by following the textbook. I realize the textbook wants the children to acquire deeper points than I expect of them. I feel like these goals become obstacles. <p>JT 2 wanted to devise teaching materials without relying on textbooks but in reality, he stated he did not have time to prepare other teaching materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JT 2: So I would like to use things that I find myself instead of things that are presented to me, but I feel like I'm too busy. That's the difficult part.

Appendix E

Analysis Worksheets for Dutch Teachers by M-GTA

DT's Analysis Worksheet 1

Concept	Students' responsibility in learning
Definition	Students are free to think for themselves about how to achieve their goals. This allows students to take responsibility for their own learning.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: And, uh, sometimes the problem is of course, when they're, uh, at this age, so it's always clear for them, what they need to learn...So, um, but, but it's nice to give them a certain scope in which they can pick their own, uh, uh, things they want to learn. ... And if we have done that, then we have achieved their goal. That's my ideal situation to promote learner autonomy. • DT 2: So they can see for themselves if it worked or not. So I just have to be there, coach them. And they have something to be proud of, as well. Because they really have learned a new skill. • DT 3: And they learn to be responsible to say, "Oh, can I have an extra lesson? Can I write myself in?" Because twice a week, there's always an extra instruction. And then they have to do it themselves. Of course, we push them. And then we lead the way. But they are responsible for that lesson. • DT 4: Well, we are in a process in our school that we want to give the students more responsibility for their own learning progress, and when you know more about your own learning process, you have to be independent yourself and can make choices by yourself. And give responsibility to the students. • DT 4: They work with the task of the week, and it is their responsibility at the end of the week that all your task is finished. ... and they can study by themselves when they have finished with the task of the week. They can learn the English words by themselves, but that's up to them, not me. It is their responsibility to see. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 3 mentioned in the regulation there is freedom in how students learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 3: And that's also with the work. For if I ask a child, "Okay, I see that you have done your math, you've done your language. Well, that's good. You went to instruction, but I see here you have chosen to do, uh, a painting. Why is that?" They will have to tell me why. So it's not all freedom and just running around. There are still boundaries, you know, and within the boundaries, there's a certain amount of freedom.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 2

Concept	Mixed-age classes
Definition	Classes are taught in different age groups, with older students becoming mentors and supporting younger students.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 1: So that's together one hour a week, and my grade I am teaching there are children from 7, 8, 9 years old...this is something which is already for some years.....getting bigger and bigger. That student can learn from each other and, umm, like what I said, it's not that I am answering all their questions. • DT 1: But it can also be they have to work together in a group, uh, and have to read a text in a group. And, umm, after they read it, from every group of four children, ...there's one student who will tell the rest of the group what they read. And they all have different reading tests. So very quickly, they, umm, learn new things. • DT 3: So five classes of five and six together, compensate. Because the way they think here is that all the children can help the younger children. So they become mentors and mentor children. And then the same goes for the smaller children. And then it continues. • DT 3: You know? So they're responsible for the little ones like in Japan, you are responsible to clean up everybody.
Theoretical notes	<p>According to DT 1, there are group days with three different age groups when the students ask questions and answer each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 1: Umm, on a group day, they answer their questions. <p>Teachers not only let students check their learning progress, but they also check it themselves, as DT 1 mentioned follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 1: So sometimes they have to, umm, yeah repeat dialogue and they have to speak in the microphone, and I can hear that. So I have got a dashboard. And I can hear what the students said in the conversation. <p>The following statement is DT 5's opinion regarding the learning style for Dutch students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 5: ...in my opinion, students should learn a language together. And it is always an interaction because it is communication, and you can't really communicate by yourself.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 3

Concept	Level-appropriate learning
Definition	Students study in classes that match their English level.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 1: And so at the beginning of the school year, they did a test. And, umm, they all have a different level. Some are experienced. Also, have some native speakers. And for other children, it's their first, umm, connection with English. • DT 1: Uh, so half an hour they are making exercises on their own time. And, umm, with... with head... headphones on and their own laptop.....and they are all doing different things depending on what their level is. • DT 4: When they are in sixth grade, when they are eight years old when they start learning English, they get English with the whole class. But the next year, we separate the children who are not so good in English; their English is slow speaks, and with a lot of translation into Dutch. And I teach in the other half of the class, and that our students that are, yes, a little bit more intelligent, or are better in English and I am talking English the whole class long, and they have to give me the answer always. • DT 4: And then our students in the class with a slow tempo and they say, "Well, I want to try to go to the other teacher, but maybe I like talking in English." So it is up to them, not the teacher, saying to the students, "Well, it maybe is good for you," which they say and they come into my class and they are following the class and sometimes you say, "Well, I can follow it. So can I stay here?" or they say, "Well, it is going too fast. I am going back to my own teacher." So that is what I mean; they have to decide for themselves. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 4 said that it is the student's responsibility to choose which class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 4: ... they make their own choice to be with me in the class. That is their responsibility. <p>According to DT 5, There are marked differences in English levels among students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 5: ... Because Dutch schools are schools with many Dutch children. They will start English education at the age of four because that is their second language. And schools that have many bilingual children really need to focus on Dutch first.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 4

Concept	Educating how to plan
Definition	From elementary school onwards, with the help of teachers, students learn how to plan to achieve their goals.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: And in that way we can, uh, uh make a plan with the whole class or with different, smaller groups. Otherwise differentiating children's levels is too difficult for, uh, 28 different small goals for me to coach them. And then we can, uh, work on that plan for five weeks. • DT 3: Here, they have to learn to plan, but they don't plan everything, of course, because at the back, there is work that they have to do. And all the other things like I'm saying, for example, this child wants to do chess because he's doing a chess tournament, he can do that. But he will have to plan it. So that means they become very responsible that their work is done. • DT 3: And because we start very young, like when they are seven, we learned to plan at the beginning with the teacher. ... And when they're in high school, they know already how to plan. And that's when it's, of course, very important.
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 4 did not mention plans but stated that students set their own goals. And since students aim to achieve their goals, it can be expected for them to make plans to get there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 4: Sometimes, they make their goals by themselves, what they want to achieve, and what is your goal in this subject, foreign language, or mathematics or English — right, some goal.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 5

Concept	Work as a coach
Definition	Teachers interact with students and act as coaches to help them achieve their learning goals.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 1: And just they, umm, have to do research. And it's not that they ask a question and I answer, or the other way around. I ask questions and they answer. ... that's part of our school culture. So all my colleagues.....work the same way. • DT 2: And we can coach them and, uh, of course, steer them a bit to what, what they need to know. And add that to what they want to know. • DT 2: We explain a couple of things; how they, uh, can use certain words and certain, uh, situations, for example—how uh, I mean, there's a part in which they get told how to introduce yourself. • DT 3: At the end of the week, when it's not done, they will have to have to talk with us. And then we will ask, why isn't it finished? And if they learn to say, "Well, I was sitting next to a friend, I was talking," or whatever reason they have. That's how we talk with them. • DT 3: Because we have once a week, we have feedback time. So I will call my students. And we will look at this and look at the work. And it will say, "I can see that you do not understand the fractions yet. What do you think you can do about it?" • DT 4: So we let them think about what are the things that you want to learn, or what are the things that you find difficult and you want to be better at it, that is the thing. • DT 5: And then, of course, the girls were really excited straightaway. Boys were like, "Oh, I have to dance. I can't dance. Really, hell no."...I said, well, then look for a song that's about soccer, or get a ball, and if you... kids dancing. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>- DT 1: Aa, I can make my own decisions of what I teach the children and which exercise I do, and if they have got suggestions for, umm, yeah, for playing ... and a little game or you know some for children. But I decide what I am... what I am doing.</p>

DT's Analysis Worksheet 6

Concept	English conversation online
Definition	Students can communicate in practical English by conversing with students from other countries online.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: I mean, it's all about communication, ... we have a conversation with somebody else, and maybe we can invite somebody from another country or have a chat on Zoom with a French school. And we can have a conversation. And if we have done that, then we have achieved their goal. That's my ideal situation to promote learner autonomy. • DT 4: And that is really a challenge that they well; they enjoy really much because last time we did it in London and interviewed with other children, and they have to make questions in English, prepare this interview, do this interview as we do it now. Well, they learn so much about it and they are practicing their English with other children. This is rather a fun thing to do. • DT 4: Then, another time, I did something with the school in America, the other way of the world, and students of my English class prepared questions that we could ask them and they—we don't know where they were, and they don't know where we were, and we had to find it out by questions, and the only answer that you can get was "yes" or "no." So it will be close questions. That is also a thing that they learn, and what would be an intelligent question to ask? And they were looking at Google Maps to find out where in the world they were, and the English students from my class, had to ask the question in English because, well, that is what they practicing with me. And the other children, the class where we are looking well, I see, maybe it is a good question to ask, "Are you on the top of the world, or below the world in the north and south?" So it was also geography at the same time, not just only English but a lot of things. • DT 5: ...in my opinion, students should learn a language together. And it is always an interaction because it is communication, and you can't really communicate by yourself. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	It has become common for all schools to interact with foreign students online.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 7

Concept	Materials beyond textbooks
Definition	By using materials other than textbooks inside and outside the school, students can acquire more practical English.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 4: It is rather nice because nowadays children start gaming and all the world these things on the internet. They learn English rather fast because they learn English more than we used to. • DT 5: It is about three lessons on one song, and for every song there is an extra exercise, and kids have a little liberty there to choose what they want. Right now there's a song that was famous because of TikTok. • DT 5: The former time, it was more like a lecture. So they had to figure out a country, the country, themselves, and state what differences it had compared to the Netherlands. In the end, it is all about vocabulary. But they can choose their own country and they get excited about the country they have been to all the holidays, or ... • DT 5: So the level used to be quite high, then it failed a bit, and now after 10 years of being a teacher, I see that there is a difference between children again online. You have to speak English there [online games]. That serves the purpose if you do it like that. They are excited about English. Also because, well, in the world there are not many people speaking Dutch.
Theoretical notes	<p>According to DT5, there were more TV programs in English when she was a child, and she was familiar with English before she learned it in school.</p> <p>- DT 5: Well, I think when I grew up as a girl, all the TV programs here would be subtitled. So we would hear a lot of English and read Dutch subtitles. But therefore, I think my generation learned quite good English. ...and when I started doing the teacher's study to become a teacher, the kids would start with English only in Group 7. So that would be the first lesson.</p>

DT's Analysis Worksheet 8

Concept	Peer cooperation
Definition	Students cooperate with each other to carry out tasks.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 1: ...if students are busy with their tasks...they are not sure how to carry on...first, they can ask their classmates. They can read, uh, the assignments again. Then they can ask another classmate. • DT 1: But it can also be they have to work together in a group, uh, and have to read a text in a group. And, umm, after they read it, from every group of four children, ...there's one student who will tell the rest of the group what they read. • DT 1: I know that in the Netherlands, this is something which is already for some years.....getting bigger and bigger. Those students can learn from each other and, umm, like what I said, it's not that I am answering all their questions. So it can also do that. Umm, on a group day, they answer their questions. • DT 2: And, uh, of course, they need to do it together. Uh, so they can learn from each other and from us as well. • DT 3: Because you can see that the children really help each other, especially at the beginning. • DT 3: You know, and then you have that mentor child who's a little bit older, who can teach it and help. So that's also an independence they have with each other so they can learn. The other one learns patience, and the other one learns to tie the shoelaces. • DT 4: Questions, helping one another, and being independent, you can do it because you do it in my English classes. It is not a problem that you can do it also with the child somewhere on the other end of the world. Well, that was such a nice thing to do. <p>The rest is omitted.</p>
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 1 tries not to give an answer to the students right away but she let them think by themselves or with classmates first, and she said it is not only in English class but also in other classes, as the following statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 1: And we have all kinds of different cooperation.... and yeah, we use them and not only in English class but in all the classes or all the lessons.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 9

Concept	Expressing students' opinions
Definition	Students are educated to express their opinions assertively.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: I mean, it's all about communication and, and that you are, um, not scared or willing to speak English with, uh, foreigner, not somebody who's English but maybe someone in France, or Germany or Japan. • DT 3: They have to learn how to formulate and not be rude. They have to learn to debate. That's what we also do. They learn to debate, sometimes we just write a sentence on the blackboard, or not on the blackboard sorry, on the device. And then it's not that I'm, you know, like standing behind it. But then I want them to think for themselves, and then you will... Like in the football of Qatar. "Why should we not go? Why should we go?" You know what I mean? And then all the answers are correct. But you teach the children to think for themselves. • DT 3: I think all schools in Holland, uh, they let the children be who they are. And not into, what I expect the child to be, or that they just have to listen and work. But they react, action, reaction. I think that's unique. But I think it's unique for Holland because, in nearly all schools, the children get taught to have an opinion. And to also build that opinion up and not just go with the flow.
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 2 stated that she showed a demonstration first before the students start the activity by themselves as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 2: We explain a couple of things; how they, uh, can use certain words and certain, uh, situations, for example—how uh, I mean, there's a part in which they get told how to introduce yourself.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 10

Concept	Grasping of student needs
Definition	Teachers need to understand the current situation of students and grasp their needs.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: Well, learner autonomy, I think is all about, uh, listening and listening to the children what they want to, uh, want to learn. • DT 2: So it's good that we can speak to each other. Because in the ideal situation, I would give, uh, them a theme like, uh, yeah, how to introduce yourself for example. And what do you need to learn, or what do you need, uh, to be able to do to have a conversation when you're on vacation with somebody you don't know? • DT 4: And sometimes, you could say, "Well, this is the thing. You don't have to make it because you know it already; I want you to do something else," and that is changing not only for the student but also for the teachers. And most of the time, this thing is a thing that is—how do you call it, the obstruct that you have to do more about the student, and sometimes from the students, also when you are not so independent and, of course, they are children.
Theoretical notes	<p>- DT 3: You know, as a teacher, if the teacher works top-down, you will never get the results you want. You will get it, but they work for you. But now because you can up there, they work for themselves. I think that's more... That's very important.</p>

DT's Analysis Worksheet 11

Concept	Providing students freedom in learning
Definition	A teacher gives students the freedom to decide how they learn and gives them a sense of satisfaction when they succeed.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 3: They have that freedom to find out, "How do I learn?" And that's... And we have to provide it. It's not that they can scream in the classroom. • DT 3: We give that strategy as freedom to children. And then you get the best result, of course, and the children, what's more important I think, and that I hope it's really recorded, is that children like to go to school. • DT 4: When they go to secondary school there are some secondary schools nearby, they teach two languages, so the Dutch language and the English language, and they are so happy when they go there because they say, "Well, teacher, I am not scared anymore" because children need to talk in English later. So I am very up high with the other students. That is rather nice. And they will be happy because their English is going faster, of course. • DT 4: They have to think about questions by themselves, and they will be practicing with their classmates, of course. First of all, how do you do an interview and think about all these other things? It is not only English. It is a lot more that you were learning at the same time, of course...And we are really nervous because they might find it a little bit scary. But afterward, it was just as fun.
Theoretical notes	- DT 3: If the children, the happier they are, the more seen they are, they will learn for themselves. And we cannot all be doctors.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 12

Concept	Insufficient English lessons
Definition	Teachers have a lot to do outside of English classes, and the number of English classes is limited.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 1: ...from the government, we are obliged to, umm, do certain things. So, uh, the schedule is... is... is very full with all kinds of compulsory things. So this one-hour English week, uh, is work for me and my colleagues, a struggle.....to push it in. • DT 1: But then I have to make it and... and there's no time for me to... to make this addition to the English lessons. • DT 2: it's also a question of time and to have the guts, you have to—that you can trust yourself in, uh, uh, and making something good for the children. • DT 5: It is like the thing in the Netherlands that everything has to be taught at primary school. So if we have a problem in the environment, we should make children aware, so put it in primary school. Yes. And everything is important, and everything has to be done. • DT 5: But it should be scheduled for about 60 minutes [English lesson] each week. And I think the perfect way to do it would be 30 minutes twice.
Theoretical notes	<p>DT 1 says they need more time to implement something else:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 1: So there's... there's... there are a lot more, uh, possibilities, but we don't have the opportunity. <p>DT 5 conducted extra English lessons during free time which was effective for students. She mentioned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT 5: Well, last week I had one day extra with Group 8 and so I told the teacher, well, I do want to do extra English then. So they just had one hour to go for music, see, for the lyrics. Yes, well, that is great. Before they get really, like, "I am not going to dance," and after that hour they were all excited.

DT's Analysis Worksheet 13

Concept	Equal relationships between teachers and students
Definition	Teachers and students are not in a top-down relationship, but in a relationship where they can have an equal dialogue, making it easier for students to learn without shrinking from teachers.
Variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT 2: The way which, uh, our relationship with the children I think is different compared to how they teach in Germany or in England. I think there is more a bit of, uh, a hierarchy. So in, in Germany, you really have to say, “Sir” and we, uh, are a bit, we’re still the boss. ... So we have a lot of more room, I think, for the dialogue and so it’s easier for children to give their input because there are less, um, freight, freight maybe a big word, but there’s—there.... Yeah. The connection is, is more there, I think. So there’s more, uh, that’s not a friendship, but it’s friendlier, maybe. • DT 2: When we, we the children part together as a group, and we hope I have to take our shared responsibility, how we—uh, how we behave and how we interact with each other. • DT 3: It’s all equal. That’s also a very important thing in this school equality. You know what I mean? So it’s the equality of the children; equality in religion, in race, in culture. Of course, I’m the teacher, that’s the child. But the child is allowed to give me feedback as well. Like, it’s not rude. Do you know what I mean? As they will say, maybe I didn’t really understand this English lesson, what you just gave, you just went too fast. And then I don’t have to do what? You listen to me. You know, I’ll just say, “Oh, well, that’s my fault. Okay. I will look into it.” And then they start. So a child becomes to be seen. Do you know what I mean? And that’s important.
Theoretical notes	DT 2’s statement “We hope I have to take our shared responsibility” can be interpreted that a teacher and students are equal so that they share their responsibilities in students’ learning.