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Type: Practice-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation

## Autonomy in EFL Education: Insights from a Rural Junior High School in Japan

*Sunday 18 May 2025 12:30 (25 minutes)*

**TITLE**

**RELEVANT SIG**

**FORMAT**

**Short English description**

**KEYWORDS**

**First-time presenter?**

**ABSTRACT**

While existing literature and studies present a wide range of theories on student autonomy, empirical data on how it is promoted in basic education EFL classes remain limited. To address this gap, this study documents student autonomy in English classes at a Japanese rural junior high school, where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom and little immediate need for the language. This study specifically aims to explore how a small rural school promotes and nurtures student autonomy in language learning.

This study employs class observations and teacher interviews to document the challenges, strategies, and tools used to promote and nurture autonomy. Class observations will provide insights into key practices that support autonomy, as well as barriers that hinder students from fully exercising it. Teacher interviews will complement these observations by confirming findings and offering additional perspectives.

Preliminary results indicate that consistent with existing theories, learner autonomy comprises distinct yet interconnected categories with specific but overlapping prerequisites. Interestingly, while previous literature often cites cultural differences and traditional teaching as obstacles to autonomy, this study finds that these factors can be leveraged as advantages. Policy and curriculum on the other hand remain as significant challenges.

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**Session Classification:** B3-204 SAT: TEVAL & Pragmatics; SUN: LLL, TYL, PIE & Global Englishes