Learner Autonomy and Autonomy Support on Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT): A Mixed-Method Study of EFL University Students in Indonesia

Hanna Sundari (hanna.sundari@gmail.com)
English Education Department, Faculty of Postgraduate Program,
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Indonesia

Rina Husnaini Febriyanti (rhfebriyanti@gmail.com)*Corresponding author
Study Program of English Education, Faculty of Language and Arts,
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Indonesia

Larisa Yohanna (larisayohanna@gmail.com)
Study Program of English Education, Faculty of Language and Arts,
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Indonesia

Abstract

The capacity to be autonomous is not innate but can be developed by a systematic formal and supportive learning environment. Thus, appropriate autonomy support mediates learners' self-regulation, initiation, and responsibility for the task. However, investigating EFL university students' learner autonomy and autonomy support by the faculties when undertaking the emergency remote teaching (ERT) system is still infrequent. To fill the void, guided by the explanatory sequential of a mixed method design, 151 participants from a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia, voluntarily filled out two questionnaires, wrote a reflective journal, and took an in-depth interview in a two-phase data collection. The findings reveal that learner autonomy and autonomy support correlate positively and significantly, which the low and high levels of autonomy support significantly impact learner autonomy. Further, the concepts of learner autonomy are oriented in various: learning, affection, capacity, and cognitively oriented. Subsequently, the students generated learner autonomy in several dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, social-interpersonal, technical, and technological aspects. Additionally, this study found that during ERT, the students stated low and high levels of autonomy support, and the support came from intrinsic support motivation, internalization, personal understanding tone, and student-focused attitude, in which the opportunity to decide as the most frequent support and provide the options and online learning resources are as the least frequent supports.

Keywords: learner autonomy, autonomy support, EFL university students, ERT

Introduction

As the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in March 2020, teachers and learners were forced to experience an immediate change in the learning system from a traditional face-to-face (FtF) learning system in the classroom to remote/online learning from home (Amin & Sundari, 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020), also called as emergency remote teaching (ERT) situations (Hodges et al., 2020) that was led to an adaptation of

technology and encouraged autonomy of learning and learner (Febriyanti, 2021). Remote and online language learning comes with issues of learner engagement and autonomy. Since remote and online learning provides less social interaction and communication with teachers and peers, learners are expected to be more autonomous in managing their learning, including making decisions and self-directing their online learning. The capacity to be autonomous is not innate but can be developed by a systematic formal learning and supportive learning environment. Further, in the Indonesian context, to create schools and universities that support autonomy and independence for learning, in 2020, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (henceforth MoEC) launched the *Merdeka* Curricula and the policy of MBKM *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (Freedom to learn – *Merdeka* Campus) that much emphasizing on student-centered learning approach and the development of independence and autonomy in finding knowledge (Krishnapatria, 2021; Maipita et al., 2021), as written on the Guidebook of MBKM (MoEC, 2020).

> *'... the Merdeka Campus is one of the essential manifestations of student-centered learning. Learning in the Merdeka Campus provides challenges and opportunities for the development of innovation, creativity, capacity, personality, and student needs, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through realities and field dynamics such as ability requirements, real problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements, through a well-designed and well-implemented independent learning program' (MoEC, 2020, p. 3).*

Along with launching the national curricula that promote student-centered learning and independent learning, the educational policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have also assumingly led to facilitating the development of autonomy and self-regulation among learners. In fact, during the ERT system in Indonesia, teachers have a great responsibility in designing online and offline teaching, facilitating learning activities, and creating student-parent-teacher communication (Sundari et al., 2021). Support from teachers is highly needed to help the students in this transition process, including adaptation and adjustment to the learning system, regulations, and technology. Having been given the support, students expectedly maintain encouragement and motivation to attend and involve in learning activities. A teacher's interpersonal attitude and behavior, known as autonomy support (Reeve, 2016), is firstly to recognize, then build, nurture, and increase students' internal source of motivation during instruction in order to fulfill the students' need for autonomy. When the teachers successfully become autonomy supportive, the students are seemingly more successful in being autonomous learners. As Reeve (2016) stated, autonomy support's first and foremost goal is to offer a learning environment and student-teacher interactions that promote students' everyday autonomy.

Since Holec's pioneering work on autonomy and foreign language learning in 1981, learner autonomy (LA) issues have gained wider international attention. Then, in the last decades, a growing number of studies has focused on the concept, beliefs, and practices of LA from both teachers (Ahmadianzadeh et al., 2018; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a, 2012b; Phan & Hamid, 2016; Syafryadin et al., 2022) and learners (Basri, 2020;

Nguyen & Habók, 2020; Resnik & Dewaele, 2021; Swatevacharkul & Boonma, 2021; Tuan, 2021; Yeung, 2016) from various nationalities. The body of research on LA has mainly been situated on traditional FtF learning systems in several countries, such as Oman, Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. Moreover, the research literature on LA mediated by technology and ICT has pointed out learner autonomy behavior and response (Hamilton, 2013b, 2013a) during a virtual learning environment and teachers' readiness in creating LA (Syafryadin et al., 2022) in ICT-based English learning activities. Additionally, particularly in an emergency teaching situation, a study by Ludwig and Tassinari (2021) has suggested that the shift to online learning has created spaces for teachers and students to be more autonomous, and teachers play a significant role in improving LA. We, however, still have little knowledge of EFL university students' LA and how they develop their LA when experiencing an immediate shift of learning systems from FtF mode into remote/online learning.

In the Indonesian context, research on LA has been chiefly associated with the teacher and learner perceptions of LA (Melvina et al., 2021b, 2021c; Ramadhiyah & Lengkanawati, 2019) and teachers' perceptions and readiness on the use of technology/ICT to promote autonomy (Melvina et al., 2021a; Syafryadin et al., 2022). To our knowledge, the previous studies have yet to explore learners' perspectives on how teachers provide support for autonomy and how this support helps them build or not build their autonomy during remote/online learning systems. Little did we know about the relationship between autonomy support from the teacher, its levels, and learner autonomy, particularly in an ERT context. Indeed, investigating learner autonomy and autonomy support is significantly necessary to look at the several sides and make connections among what the learners perceive of LA, what level of LA they think they are, and what support they need to develop their autonomy for learning from their point of view. The contributions of this research were placed for the teachers in such contexts to understand students' autonomy better and how it develops so that the teachers at the classroom level can design and provide appropriate autonomy supports to their students. At the same time, the other stakeholders/policymakers at the institutional level can issue a policy and regulation concerning a virtual learning environment at the university that promotes learner autonomy because institutional support is necessary for the students to take control over their learning (Teng, 2018). As autonomy can occur in distinct forms for different persons in different contexts and times, even for one person (Teng, 2018), such investigation on an immediate change in the learning system from students' points of view is worth studying. Moreover, each teacher appears to have distinctive manners in practicing autonomy-supportive instruction (Reeve, 2016); we assumed that autonomy support by the teachers has positively and remarkably correlated to learner autonomy during the ERT system. Thus, this research examines the EFL university students' learner autonomy, autonomy support, and the types of autonomy support from teachers when they confront an immediate change of teaching system from a face-to-face (FtF) to an ERT system and after two years of undertaking this system. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How does the autonomy support correlate to the EFL university students' autonomy learner development after undertaking the ERT system?
2. What do the EFL university students perceive of learner autonomy? How do they build their learner autonomy when they confront the ERT system?

3. What types of autonomy support from the teachers are given to the students?

Literature Review

Learner autonomy and autonomy support in foreign language learning

The concepts and practices of autonomy are multidimensional and complex. Though autonomy is believed to be a pre-condition of effective and successful learning (Benson, 2013), the term is interchangeable with various terms, such as self-regulation, independent learning, and self-instruction. Teng (2018) describes the conceptual discussion of learner autonomy as 'far from consistent, coherent, and systematic' (p. 2). However, the most widely known definition of autonomy in language learning firstly came from Holec's work *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*, a report that proposed autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning (Benson, 2013, 2016; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018). The term 'ability' indicates that the learner can determine the goals and contents of learning; he is an initiator and a controller of his learning. In this sense, an autonomous learner meets the elements of LA proposed by Holec, such as formulating his learning objectives, clarifying his contents and progress, choosing his method/techniques in learning, and evaluating the development (Teng, 2018). Learner autonomy is then viewed as a shift from 'directed teaching' to 'self-instructed learning' (Little, 2007) when the learner has a responsibility and ownership of his learning. Therefore, the central idea is learner autonomy as a constructed, subjective, individual knowledge of learning management.

On the same note, Benson (2013, p. 2) broadly defined autonomy as 'the capacity to take control over one's learning …, not a method of learning, but an attribute of the learner's approach to the learning process. It stresses the notion of choice and decision-making to imply the term 'control'. Control is the power to make choices and decisions with three dimensions: learning management, cognitive processes, and learning content (Benson, 2016; Teng, 2018). Moreover, Cotterall (1995, 2000) proposed a more practical definition of learner autonomy as 'the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning (p.195). The tactics include setting goals, choosing materials and tasks, designing practices, and monitoring the progress. Learners can perform the tactics to varying degrees so that autonomy occurs in different approaches, manifests numerous forms, and takes to differing degrees (Cotterall, 1995; Teng, 2018). In conclusion, several essential aspects of learner autonomy can be drawn, as suggested by some experts.

- Autonomy should be seen from multiple perspectives, for instance, psychological, political, sociocultural, and technical perspectives (Benson, 2016; Teng, 2018)
- Autonomy can take different forms for a different person in a different context or at a different time (Benson, 2016; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018)
- The degrees of autonomy are unstable and variable (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a)
- The development of learner autonomy requires collaboration and interdependence instead of isolation; it can be inside and outside the classroom (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018)

As autonomy is viewed as not an innate ability, the capacity or ability to be autonomous can be acquired in a natural setting or systematic formal learning (Little,

2007). Benson (2013) argued that appropriate conditions and preparation could be opportunities for less autonomous learners to develop their autonomy. Thus, supports are significant in the development of autonomy for learners. In the perspectives of formal instruction, Reeve (2016, p. 130) defined autonomy support as 'the instructional effort to provide students with a classroom environment and a student-teacher relationship that can support their students' need for autonomy. Bearing these concepts in mind, autonomy support includes support from the environment and teacher. Then to support their students' autonomy and active engagement, autonomy-supportive teachers encourage learners to act on their decisions and preferences (Basri, 2020) and facilitate learners to adopt a curious, open, and flexible attitude toward students and their perspectives (Reeve & Cheon, 2021), as lists of characteristics of autonomy support are shown in Table 1. Considering the essential roles of teachers in creating autonomy supportive learning environment, social interactions with peers and teachers are pivotal for the development of autonomy among learners (Ribbe & Bezanilla, 2013).

Table 1
The characteristics of autonomy support (Reeve, 2006)

The Characteristics	Descriptions of teachers do
Nurture inner emotional resources	Coordinating instructions with students' interests, preferences, sense of enjoyment, sense of challenge, competencies, and choice-making; avoiding rewards, deadlines, and incentives. Supporting students' initiative on task
Rely on informational, non-controlling language	Communicate informationally and flexibly, such as information-rich, competence-affirming utterances. Communicate not to push, pressure, or coerce students. Treat students' poor performance as problems to be solved
Communicate value and provide a rationale	Make special efforts to identify and explain the learning's use, value, and importance.
Acknowledge and accept students' expressions of negative affect	Accept students' negative affect and feelings. Welcome to the ensuing discussion of how the source of them. Communicate an understanding of the students' perspectives.
Autonomy-supportive behavior	Listen carefully. Create opportunities for students to work in their way. Provide opportunities for students to talk. Arrange learning materials and seating patterns, so students manipulate objects and conversation. Encourage effort and persistence. Praise sign of improvement and mastery. Offers progress enabling hints when students seem stuck. Respond to the student's questions and comments. Communicate an explicit acknowledgment of the students' perspectives.

Further, Benson (2013) proposed guidelines for teachers to support and foster autonomy for their learners in five broad directions: 1) be actively involved in students' learning, 2) provide options and resources, 3) offer choices and decision-making opportunities, 4) support learners, and 5) encourage reflection. Specifically for language

learning, the strategies of teacher support can be applied in various forms, such as providing encouraging student preparation, setting out-class experience, delivering authentic materials and natural language, designing independent inquiry, involving the student in course design, facilitating student-student interaction, peer teaching, and self- and peer-assessment, and setting reflection sessions (Benson, 2016).

Autonomy supportive learning environment occurs when the teachers prefer to act and do specific instructional behavior: nurturing inner motivational sources, relying on non-controlling informal language, and acknowledging the students' feelings and points of view (Jang et al., 2010). A supportive environment for learning provides advantages to learners in many ways. Autonomy support can predict the measures of students' engagement (Jang et al., 2010) and foster self-regulation and more significant learning outcomes (Lee et al., 2015). Additionally, the support to be autonomous learners also benefit students' motivation, classroom engagement, skill development, academic achievement, and psychological well-being (Reeve & Cheon, 2016), specifically autonomous motivation (Black & Deci, 2000; Gagné, 2003). It is also found that autonomy support is positively related to self-controlled learning (Ma, 2021) and leads to the successful completion of online courses (Seiver & Troja, 2014). A high quality of teacher autonomy, competence, and relatedness support correlates with autonomous motivation (Maulana et al., 2016). Therefore, it hypothetically assumes that the more the teachers provide autonomy-supportive behaviors, the more the learners develop autonomy and demonstrate the ability to own and take responsibility for their learning, particularly in the context of an ERT.

Learner autonomy and autonomy support in online/remote learning

The nature of online/remote learning applies limited access to the teachers and lacks face-to-face interactions between teacher-student and student-student, so this learning system requires the students to take more responsibility, control, and ownership of their learning (Nayernia, 2020). Indeed, it is believed that the development of learner autonomy is not isolated (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018), autonomy supportive learning environment should give some great opportunities to learners to interact with others in social settings (Lewis, 2013) to develop their capacity to be autonomous. However, as suggested by Ribbe and Bezanilla (2013), autonomy-supportive teachers can scaffold the students' development of learner autonomy in the core areas of learner involvement, learner reflection, and an authentic learning environment and community of practice. Online learning experiences, such as distance learning programs with restricted interactions, can still allow self-directed learning and autonomy among learners in two dimensions: a reflective dimension and a collaborative/reciprocal dimension to learning (Eneau & Develotte, 2012).

Recent discussions and investigations around the issues of online education and autonomy-supportive learning environment have suggested that technology-supported language learning environments can be great potential in developing learner autonomy. In a blended learning system at the university level with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions, a study by Kaur and Sidhu (2010) has indicated that learners showed confidence in planning, organizing, and monitoring their learning. Additionally, by investigating college students in China, Wang et al. (2021) have found that students perceived learning autonomy were very important in blended learning, and this learning

mode can create a supportive learning environment by enhancing learners' awareness of learning autonomy and fostering them to redouble their efforts in learning. Further, qualitative research by Ding and Shen (2022) explored MOOCs and examined learner autonomy, particularly in English vocabulary MOOCs. The findings have indicated that the learners showed the learners exercised autonomy by adopting several strategies: metacognitive strategies, motivation control strategies, and emotion control strategies to regulate their learning.

Methodology

This current study explored the EFL university students' learner autonomy and autonomy support from teachers after undertaking the ERT system from the student's point of view. To deeply investigate the formulated research problems and fully understand the phenomenon (Gay et al., 2012; Migiro & Magangi, 2011), a mixed-method research design was selected as the method of the study to investigate the problem from multiple standpoints with the flexibility to a changing situation (Bazeley, 2018). Guided by an explanatory sequential design, which involves a two-phase project of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014), this current investigation combined a two-phase data collection by obtaining quantitative survey results from the population in the first phase and then refining the findings through in-depth qualitative exploration (Creswell, 2015) to provide a holistic description of what happened in the field (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). At first, a quantitative survey was conducted to gain the current levels of learner autonomy and to examine its correlation to autonomy support. Further, a follow-up qualitative case study that analyzes one or a small number of very concrete samples of the complex dimensions of people's language-related and social engagement (Duff, 2020), was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of learner autonomy and autonomy support in retrospective reflective dimensions by conducting the in-depth interview and reflective journals through selective sampling into group-samples.

Research site and participants

One private university in Jakarta, Indonesia, which had applied the policy of campus closure from the early pandemic in mid-March 2020 until data collection in 2022, was selected as a research site. As this current research addressed a specific group of students and had limited sources and time, purposive sampling with a convenience criterion was selected by choosing the sites or people who have the best knowledge and experience to develop a detailed understanding (Creswell, 2015) and by selecting the cases with the easiest access under the ERT conditions (Flick, 2009). The pool participants are juniors (year 3) and seniors (year 4) from the English Education Department who have experienced face-to-face learning systems before the pandemic and have undertaken immediate remote learning systems (ERT) from 2020 up to 2022. The participants were informed that the participation was voluntary and that their responses would be held completely confidential. 103 juniors and 48 seniors expressed their agreement to participate in this study on a consent form after distributing a questionnaire for a month. Moreover, twelve participants were purposely selected based on their levels of LA dan their willingness for a follow-up interview and reflective journals. The demographical information can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic information of participants and data collection

Level	Gender		Total	Age			Qt Stage (Quest)	Ql Stage (RJ)	Ql Stage (I)
	F	M		20-22	23-24	≥ 25			
Juniors	81	22	103	75	22	6	103	6	6
Seniors	43	5	48	24	15	9	48	3	3

*Qt: Quantitative   *Ql: Qualitative   *Quest: Questionnaire   *RJ: Reflective Journal   *I: Interview

Data collection

This mixed-method study involved two distinct phases of data collection. During the quantitative phase, we utilized two online questionnaires to examine the students' learner autonomy (LA) and autonomy support (AS) they receive from teachers. The 22-item LA online questionnaire was constructed from the perspectives of learner autonomy proposed by Oxford (2003) and Benson (1997 cited in Teng, 2018; Tuan, 2021) to rate, as seen in Table 3. The items were presented according to a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1= never, 2 = seldom, 3= sometimes, 4= often, 5= always) for each cluster of LA perspectives. The validation of the LA questionnaire for the Indonesian context reached $r_{count} > 0.159$ (*P* value <.05) for each item, and the calculated internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α), showed .866; it indicates that the LA online questionnaire was valid and reliable to use.

Table 3
Perspectives of learner autonomy (Oxford, 2003; Benson, 1997)

Perspectives	Description	Statements
Psychological perspective	The capacity for students to take responsibility for their learning	5 items
Political perspective	Conditions in which students take control over the content and process of their learning	7 items
Sociocultural perspective	The role of cooperation and social interaction	5 items
Technical perspective	Learning activities outside formal education without the aid of the teacher	5 items

Similarly, an online questionnaire for autonomy support (AS) was developed based on the dimensions of autonomy support and a pedagogical strategy for autonomy by Benson (2003, 2016) to rate the support the teachers give them during online/remote learning. A five-point Likert scale ranged from 1= 'never' to 5= 'always' respectively, and the 19-item questionnaire reported its reliability by Cronbach's alpha of .912 and its validity by $r_{count} > 0.159$ (*P* value <.05) for each item. The final version of the questionnaires included a section of the participants' demographical information, such as gender, age, and length of undertaking online/remote learning. The LA and AS questionnaires were delivered in the student's first language (Bahasa Indonesia) to understand better and avoid misinterpretation of the statements. The students completed the online questionnaires of LA and AS by the end of July 2022.

Moreover, two closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to assess the student's self-perception of their LA development before and after taking the ERT for two years. The students were then asked to respond and fill in two statements: '*Before online/remote learning (pandemic period) in early 2020, you saw yourself as a student who is ...*' and '*After undergoing online/remote learning (pandemic) for about two years, you see yourself as a student who is ...*'. Then, the four options provided ranged from '*very autonomous*', '*autonomous*', '*not autonomous*', to '*not autonomous at all*' on the Likert Scale; the students' responses to these questions can be seen in Table 4. Further, from the result and responses to the questionnaire, the students were then categorized based on their level of LA (high level and low level) and self-perception of LA development.

Table 4
The students' LA levels

Level	ERT	Very Autonomous		Autonomous		Not Autonomous		Not Autonomous at all	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Junior	**Before**	14	13.59	78	75.73	10	9.71	1	0.97
	After	26	25.24	64	62.14	12	11.65	1	0.97
Senior	**Before**	4	8.33	41	85.42	3	6.25	0	0.00
	After	14	29.17	31	64.58	2	4.17	1	2.08

At the stage of qualitative data collection, reflective journals and in-depth follow-up interviews were instruments for a holistic description of what occurred on the site (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) concerning the students' LA development and autonomy support from teachers. Twelve (two males and ten females) students were purposely selected based on their LA levels (Juniors: 4 low LA students and 3 high LA students; Seniors: 2 low LA students and 3 high LA students), their self-perception of LA development, and their willingness to take part in the stage of qualitative data collection. In a reflective journal, they were asked to express their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in retrospective reflective dimensions proposed by Smyth's DICR reflection practices (1989 cited in Williams & Grudnoff, 2011) into four components of guided questions: describing, informing, confronting, and reconstructing. Moreover, to continually focus on exploring students' points of view on LA and AS, we conducted an in-depth interview, in which an interview guide was prepared before the interview but did not rigidly adhere to it (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The open-ended main questions for the interview were firstly constructed based on the perspectives of LA (Oxford, 2003; Benson, 1997) and the characteristics of autonomy-supportive teachers by Reeve (2006). Then, follow-up/probing questions were employed to elicit more detailed information and confirmation. The students were given the options for a virtual interview delivery, such as video call, videoconferencing recording, email, and instant messaging, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013). Most of them chose synchronous WhatsApp instant messenger as it offered more flexibility, a two-way interaction, and ease of access; only one student asked for a structured-asynchronous interview by sending the file of interview questions and returning the response. The interview and all questions were delivered in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure the students understood the questions and gave relevant answers. We approached twelve selected students for the interview procedure; however, until mid-

October 2022, only nine students had completed the process because of time constraints and health issues. Since we applied pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Pimple, 2002), the students were then undernamed as Hisyam (student 1), Lia (student 2), Yanti (student 3), Bulan (student 4), Prima (student 5), Syifa (student 6), Ayu (student 7), Candra (student 8), and Siska (student 9).

Data Analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, a descriptive statistics analysis was helped by SPSS Software Analysis version 26. In a qualitative analysis of the interview, open-ended questionnaire, and reflective journals, the method of thematic analysis (TA), which provides a systematic analysis of classification and themes related to the data, was selected. At first, data were divided into two datasets to serve two research questions that dealt with learner autonomy and autonomy support. Then, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013), the stages of coding and analysis consist of 1) data preparation, 2) reading and familiarization, 3) coding across the entire dataset, 4) searching the themes, repeated words, and patterns 5) reviewing the themes and sub-themes, 6) defining and naming themes, and 7) writing for finalizing analysis and framework. To warrant rigor and trustworthiness, the first author conducted the initial round of data coding and analysis; then, the second author independently checked and examined the entire dataset, including the emerged codes, categories, themes, and framework. For any differences, discussion and cross-checking were undertaken to achieve a final decision.

Results

The analysis of two-phase data collection and analysis highlighted some main findings. The research findings were presented to serve the formulated research questions as follows:

1. **How does autonomy support correlate to EFL university students' autonomy learner development after undertaking the ERT system?**

The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the correlation between learner autonomy and autonomy support. As seen in Table 5, the coefficient correlation of learner autonomy and autonomy support shows that $r_{value} = 0.532 > r_{table} = 0.16$ ($\alpha = 0.01$). This indicated that learner autonomy has a positive and moderately strong relationship. Further, a significance value (2-tailed) of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicated a statistically significant relationship between learner autonomy and autonomy support.

Table 5
The result of the Pearson Correlation

		Learner Autonomy	Autonomy Support
Learner Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	.532[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	151	151
Autonomy Support	Pearson Correlation	.532[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

	N	151	151

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Further, the equation of regression Y= 45.908 + 0.5 X stated that there was a positive effect in which the increase in autonomy support enhanced the variable of learner autonomy by 0.500 units, with the value of Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that autonomy support significantly affects learner autonomy.

Table 6
The results of the coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	45.908	4.869		9.429	.000
	Autonomy Support	.500	.065	.532	7.664	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Learner Autonomy

Considering the contribution, the effect of autonomy support on learner autonomy was 28.3% (see Table 7), and the rest, 72.7%, was influenced by other variables.

Table 7
Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.532ᵃ	.283	.278	8.553

a. Predictors: (Constant), Autonomy Support

Table 8
The result of Levene's test

	Lavene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Inter Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Up
Equal variances assumed	.008	.929	-4.878	149	.000	-7.446	1.526	-10.462	
Equal variances not assumed			-4.875	147.676	.000	-7.446	1.527	-10.464	

The t-test is carried out after the data is determined to be normally distributed and homogenous (P value > .05 in the Test of Normality-Kolmogorov and Test of variance Homogeneity). T-test shows that *P* value has a value of Sig. < .05. Then there is a significant difference between the low and high categories in autonomy support toward learner autonomy. In other words, there is a significant difference between the autonomy support in the low and high categories, with the average difference at 7.446 (mean difference).

2. **What do the EFL university students perceive of learner autonomy? How do they build their learner autonomy when they confront the ERT system?**

Based on qualitative data analysis, the students' perceptions of learner autonomy cover several orientations. As seen in the thematical framework in Figure 1, the students perceived learner autonomy concerning learning activity and management, affection dimension, capacity/ability, and cognitive process.

Figure 1
Thematical framework of students' perception of LA
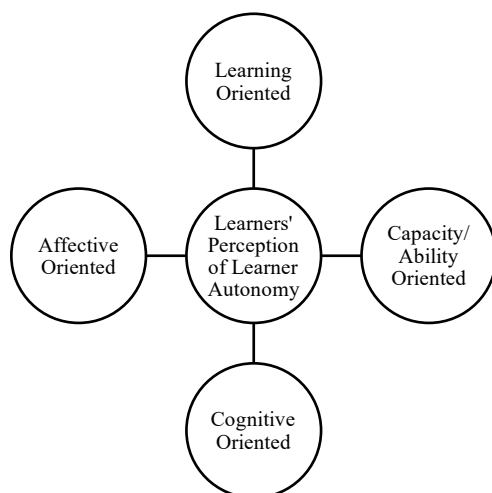
In learning-oriented learner autonomy, some students revealed that autonomy is closely related to time and learning management, self-study, and self-learning. In the interview, two junior students, Yanti and Bulan, expressed what learner autonomy means to them.

> "…autonomy learning is a learning process carried out by students without the help of others, such as friends or teachers, in mastering the material and determining what learning activities are appropriate for themselves…when learning independently, it begins by taking the time to study every day for at least an hour and to explore the studied material..." (Int-LLA-Yanti-6)

> "…learner autonomy is when a student manages his learning activities…Like time management and a fit method." (Int-LLA-Bulan-6)

Some students stated that learner autonomy is dealt with the learner's capacity or capability to study without help from others, as narrated by one of the interviewees, Syifa.

> "…student learner autonomy is when we carry out learning activities with full confidence to accomplish the learning activities helpless from others." (Int-HLA-Syifa-6)

The theme of cognitive-oriented learner autonomy covers the process of decision-making, initiative, awareness, and creativity. Some students perceived that learner autonomy could be marked by *taking the initiative to do the tasks* (Int-HLA-Siska-8), *having the nature of responsibility and initiative* (Int-HLA-Candra-8), and *being responsible for making decisions related to the learning process* (Int-HLA-Syifa-6).

Further, the students also perceived that autonomy could be related to the affective dimensions of the learners. The interview excerpt below revealed their emotional affective attributes, such as curiosity, self-motivation, self-encouragement, willingness, enthusiasm, and confidence, as narrated by these junior students, Hisyam and Prima.

> "Autonomy in learning arises from oneself; a great sense of curiosity can encourage someone to explore information based on curiosity." (Int-HLA-Hisyam-6)

> "Learner autonomy is an encouragement from yourself when you want to do something (learning activity) … for the average person (especially myself), if you want to learn, if there is no encouragement or willingness from yourself to understand the material, it will be difficult." (Int-LLA-Prima-6)

Before the pandemic, some students saw themselves as autonomous, independent learners in traditional learning systems, as Chandra and Prima said. On the other hand, the others struggled to learn independently, as Syifa, Bulan, and Ayu expressed.

> "Before the pandemic, I was included as a fairly independent student because I have the nature of responsibility for my duties as a student." (Int-HLA-Chandra-8)

> "… before the pandemic [it] was a time when I was an independent [learner] because, since high school, I had the desire to go to college, and after knowing the learning system in college was different from high school, my learning independence increased; nonetheless my ability needs more improvement. "(Int-LLA-Prima-6)

> "I felt that I was not independent enough at that time, mam…because of many interactions and discussions with classmates, I tend to relax and neglect my responsibilities at the time."(Int-HLA-Syifa-6)

> "Prior to the pandemic, I was beginning to pursue my independent, or rather when I started to be a college student, because the way of learning between school students and college students is, of course, different." (Int-LLA-Bulan-6)

> "…before the pandemic, I was a student who was not independent because I always waited for the lecture schedule and course material to be delivered by the lecturer, so I was only glued to the lecturer's learning material."(Int-HLA-Ayu-8)

When experiencing the ERT system, most students, with either high or low autonomy levels, admitted that the immediate shift of the teaching system came with challenges and difficulties. It can be seen in the journals written by Lia and Chandra below.

> "Online learning is quite an adaptation period. I try to manage between studies, leisure time, and other daily activities. I miss the campus atmosphere sometimes. The most annoying thing relates to the problems of poor internet network and the uncompromising storage of my mobile phone to accommodate many files." (Refl-HLA-Lia-6)

> "Of course, it is a new habit for me; studying from home and only through screens makes me feel stressed and anxious; I used to meet friends and study together, and at that time, I was required to study independently and only communicate using a cell phone/laptop." (Refl-HLA-Chandra-8)

With these ERT situations, the students were forced to initiate, develop, and strengthen their learning autonomy to successfully maintain their learning motivation, process, and performance. Qualitative data revealed that the students applied and implemented numerous practices in handling online learning during ERT. The students' autonomous acts were their practices, behaviors, and actions, indicating they tried to manage and control their learning. As shown in Figure 2, these autonomous acts have then emerged into several dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, social interpersonal, and technical, technological dimensions.

Figure 2
Thematical framework of students' autonomous acts during ERT
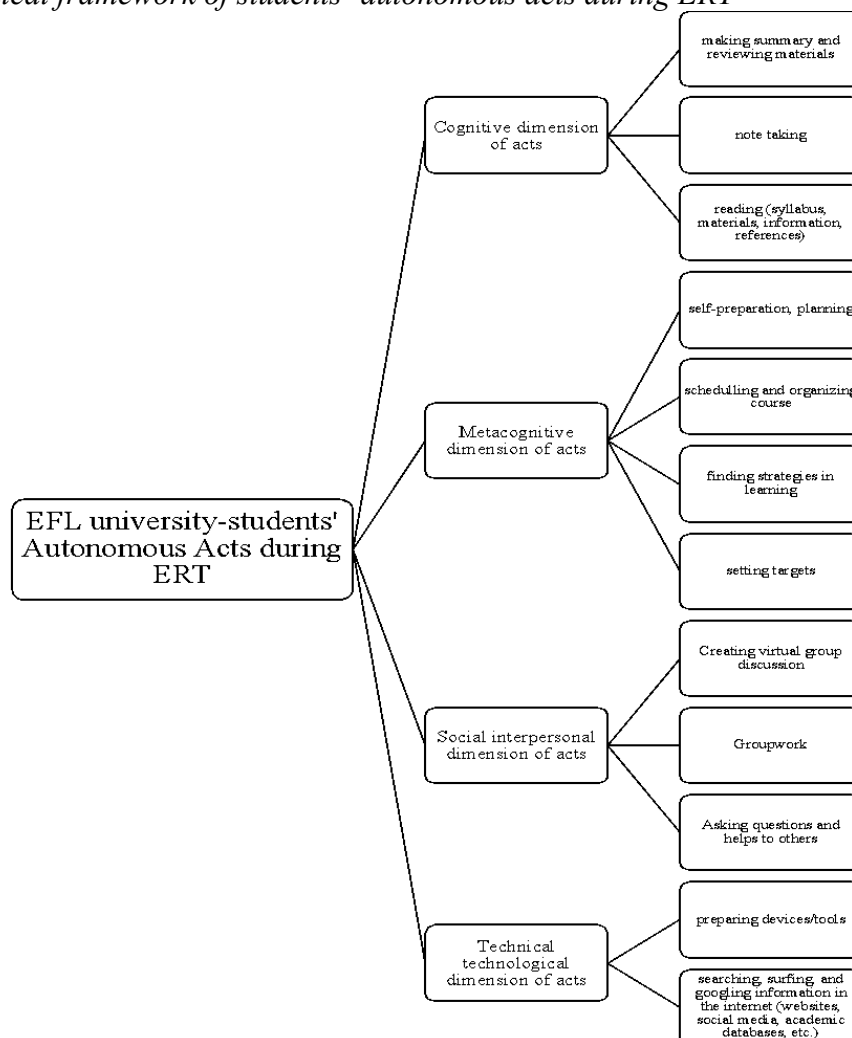
Lia and Prima, junior students, narrated their autonomous acts during ERT by integrating cognitive, metacognitive, social-interpersonal, and technical dimensions. The following is from the interview and journal excerpts.

"Over time, I found a rhythm and a flow to satisfy my every curiosity and need for the material presented. Actively asking is one of the reasons that I can understand. Then I will look for additional reading by [online] searching, noting every part that I get. If possible, ask and chat with the teacher during working hours (ethics); also, discuss with friends whom I think can share their insights and knowledge so that I can understand better. Sometimes I also look for books at a relative's house or the library. If needed, hang out at Gramedia [book store] near the house." (Int-HLA-Lia-6)

"During online learning, I manage my studies by managing time and minimizing distractions, such as recording deadlines for each task,

avoiding things that interfere with my focus on learning, and then making targets for what tasks will be completed within one day." (Refl-LLA-Prima-6)

In addition, senior students Chandra and Ayu expressed their practices as autonomous acts during ERT, as in the excerpts of reflective journals below.

"I live online learning activities well, of course, because I have managed my time to study. I think it becomes more ineffective and careless during the online learning process. The thing I do to improve online learning is by managing the best possible time, not piling up assignments, being ready 10 minutes before class starts, and getting enough rest." (Refl-HLA-Chandra-8)

"Learning independently outside of class hours [synchronous sessions] and looking for additional material on the internet." (Refl-HLA-Ayu-8)

3. **What types of autonomy support from the teachers are given to EFL university students?**

From the Autonomy Support questionnaire distributed to the students, the support was then grouped into high and low categories. Table 8 describes the categories of support among the two groups of participants.

Table 9
The levels of autonomy support

Level	Level of Autonomy Support	Frequency	Percentage
Junior	**High**	52	50.5%
	Low	51	49.5%
Senior	**High**	24	50.0%
	Low	24	50.0%

The qualitative data from interviews and journals confirmed that the student's perceptions of teacher support during ERT were poles apart. Some students perceived that they got tremendous and optimal support from the teachers during ERT, as narrated by Siska and Syifa.

"The lecturer provides opportunities [for autonomy], for example negotiating the time to collect assignments. I am also working, so if I do not have enough time to do my assignments, I ask the lecturer for more time." (Int-HLA-Siska-8)

"The last online class gave me many opportunities to vote and express opinions. For example, when determining groups, discussions with groups/lecturers." (Int-HLA-Syifa-6)

On the contrary, several students also expressed a tendency of negative opinions related to the support from the teachers during ERT. Yanti and Prima said in the interview that some teachers gave strict rules and rigid systems and were not open to complaints and negotiation.

"Some lecturers want and do not want to listen to and accept student complaints or criticisms. I have had several lecturers. At that time, we were asked to give our opinions about his learning, but when we submitted our complaints, he seemed to deny and dismiss what we complained about him; therefore, in his next lesson, we conveyed the good things [smile]." (Int-LLA-Yanti-6)

"For example, last semester, some students complained about the teaching method of one of the lecturers, the attendance system, and the assignment system. Nevertheless, some lecturers accept and change it, and there are also those who accept it but then return it to the students." (Int-LLA-Prima-6).

Based on the distributed questionnaire of Autonomy Support, it was descriptively found that support provided by the teachers to promote learner autonomy during ERT covers all four aspects of autonomy support: being actively involved, providing options and resources, offering choices and decision making, supporting learners, and encouraging reflection. The most frequent support was that the teachers offered excellent opportunities in making choices and decisions; meanwhile, the least frequent was providing options and learning resources. The percentages can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10
The results of aspects of autonomy support

Aspects of Autonomy Support	Percentage
Be Actively Involved	20.78%
Provide Options & Resources	18.79%
Offer choices & Dec. Making	21.18%
Support Learners	19.87%
Encourage Reflection	19.39%

Further, this current research tried to explore the students' points of view on the portrayal of the autonomy support provided by the teachers to them. From qualitative data analysis of interviews and journals, four themes emerged to describe autonomy support: intrinsic support motivation, support internalization, understanding interpersonal tone, and student-focused attitude, as seen in the thematic framework in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Thematical framework of students' perception of autonomy support

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                                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                              ┌─────│ giving motivation,          │
                    ┌──────────────┐│ encourgament, suggestion,   │
              ┌────│ support intrinsic │ story                     │
              │     │ motivation        │
              │     └──────────────┘ └─────────────────────────────┘
              │                       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │                  └────│ giving maximum support      │
              │                       └─────────────────────────────┘
              │                       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │                  ┌────│ providing syllabus, content │
              │                  │    │ materials, book references, │
              │     ┌──────────────┐  │ etc.                        │
              │     │ support        │ └─────────────────────────────┘
              ├────│ internalization   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │     │ (of value, belief,│ opportunities for group    │
              │     │ and regulation)   │ formation                  │
              │     └──────────────┘  └─────────────────────────────┘
┌──────────────┐                       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ EFL University-  │                  └│ informing tasks and tests   │
│ students'        │                   └─────────────────────────────┘
│ perception of    │                   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ autonomy support │              ┌────│ friendly, informal,         │
│ by the teachers  │              │    │ flexible, casual            │
│ during ERT       │              │    │ communication               │
└──────────────┘                  │    └─────────────────────────────┘
              │     ┌──────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              ├────│ understanding     │ being good listener         │
              │     │ interpersonal tone│                            │
              │     └──────────────┘  └─────────────────────────────┘
              │                       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │                  └────│ receiving complaints        │
              │                       └─────────────────────────────┘
              │                       ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │                  ┌────│ opportunities for negotiation│
              │     ┌──────────────┐  └─────────────────────────────┘
              └────│ student-focused   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │ attitude          │ opportunities to ask, speak │
                    └──────────────┘  │ and choose                  │
                                       └─────────────────────────────┘
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As expressed by the senior students in the interview, the excerpts below indicated the autonomy support the teachers gave during ERT.

"… the teacher reminded us to evaluate learning as well as in preparing group presentations; how to convey material to friends. (Int-HLA-Chandra-8)

"… sometimes, teachers communicate informally, for example, when the teacher tells his experience so that his experience can be a lesson for me."(Int-HLA-Siska-8)

"…teachers communicate informally and flexibly; for example, if I do not understand what is being said, I can ask about the problem privately through WhatsApp conversations… hear and accept my complaints and negative feelings; for example, the teachers understand students whose internet connection is not good and understands students who are late in taking online sessions as well as providing the material that is described when the online session is over [asynchronous sessions]." (Int-HLA-Ayu-8)

Further, junior students narrated autonomy support that promotes them to be more autonomous learners during ERT in the following interview excerpt.

"[from] The explanations the lecturer gave, we can dig deeper if we want to develop it… The motivation and enthusiasm of the teachers are when they are still asking about the progress of the tasks given at the next meeting or in the form of additional explanations when students finish presentations, discussions and learning reviews. As much as possible, the teacher gives time for students to ask questions." (Int-HLA-Lia-6)

"… for example, at the end of the Zoom meeting, [the teacher is] giving motivational quotes and giving encouragement to keep learning and not be lazy to find your learning resources. I find it very useful." (Int-HLA-Syifa-6)

".. all teachers provide lecture plans. I find it very useful, especially with the syllabus… I can know the material that will be studied this semester, so I can prepare myself and wait for the next day to discuss the material in the syllabus." (Int-LLA-Yanti-6)

Discussion

This study was aimed at examining and exploring the EFL university students' learner autonomy and autonomy support given to them during ERT. After undertaking a two-phase data collection and analysis, some significant quantitative and qualitative findings are revealed to understand these phenomena better.

The research's statistical analysis also found that learner autonomy positively correlates significantly to autonomy support. This finding was consistent with the result of previous research by Ma (2012) that found a positive relationship between autonomy support and self-controlled learning. Moreover, the statistical result of this current study also revealed that low and high levels of autonomy support significantly impact learner autonomy. It may indicate that when the teachers act in autonomous supportive behaviors, such as providing more options and choices, promoting reflection, and receiving students' feelings and voices (Jang et al., 2010), it may result in opportunities for learners to develop their autonomy. In contrast, the strict, non-negotiated rules, limited options, and controlled language given by the teachers may cause the learners to rely heavily on the

teachers at every stage of learning. Given these controlled learning situations, the learners might have lost their feeling of ownership and control of their learning, and the teachers and learners might have missed the opportunities to build learners' autonomous motivation (Black & Deci, 2000; Gagné, 2003; Maulana et al., 2016) that leads to the development of learner autonomy. This indicates the prominent role of autonomy support as the facilitator of autonomous behavior performed by the students, as written by Basri (2020). This statistical finding from the present research also supports what Reeve (2016) proposed: autonomy support aims to promote students' everyday autonomy through learning activities, communication, and interactions. These findings also prove that appropriate teaching and systematic formal learning can allow students to develop and strengthen their autonomy (Benson, 2013; Little, 2007).

This study's thematic framework of students' perceptions of learner autonomy depicts multiple autonomy orientations. The students perceived autonomy concerning learning orientation, affection orientation, capacity/ability, and cognitive process. A similar finding is also revealed in a study by Melvina et al. (2021c) that reported that the conception of autonomy by undergraduate students included independent learning, self-awareness, and self-initiation to learn outside the classroom. Therefore, the characteristics of learner autonomy cover not only the term potential 'capacity' and 'ability' (Benson, 2013, 2016; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018) and cognitive factors (Reinders, 2010 cited in Al-Sadi, 2015), but also actual actions and behavior.

From the self-perception of autonomy in qualitative data in this current study, prior to the ERT, some students were defined as autonomous learners; on the other hand, the rest thought they were less autonomous. After undertaking the ERT system, the number of autonomous learners increases. In the meantime, a study by Melvina et al. (2021c) in a traditional ESP learning context categorized the undergraduate students' level of learner autonomy as moderate. This finding confirms that the degree of autonomy is unstable and variable (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a), and its development needs collaboration and interdependence, and the autonomy process can be inside and outside the classroom (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018).

The finding of this present research described that the students applied numerous practices of autonomous acts during ERT, such as cognitive, metacognitive, social interpersonal, and technical technological dimensions of acts. It can be understood that, in the first place, autonomy is multiple perspectives and takes different forms in different contexts (Benson, 2016; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018). Commonly in formal learning environments such as schools and universities, the course program (syllabus, objectives, content materials, schedules) has been strictly designed. However, it is also a room for students to take control of learning. As revealed in this current study, after informing the syllabus, the students can plan their learning, including preparation, learning strategy, and time management. In this sense, during the ERT system, they have the power of decision-making, responsibility, and ownership of the learning as the salient features of learner autonomy (Benson, 2013; Cotterall, 1995; Little, 2007; Teng, 2018).

Concerning autonomy support, the quantitative analysis resulted in two levels of support (low and high) among juniors and seniors with relatively similar frequency, and the qualitative data from the interview supported this quantitative finding. The student's views on autonomy support are poles apart. Some students feel their ERT environment support and lead them to autonomy, while others think the support provided by the teachers is insufficient to promote their autonomy and self-learning. Indeed, autonomy-

supportive teaching, done either sufficiently or poorly, benefit the students in motivation, classroom engagement, skill development, academic achievement, and psychological well-being (Reeve & Cheon, 2016). Further, the current research also found that support in the form of chances in making the decision is the most frequent support, and few teachers are considered less supportive in providing options and resources for online learning. Consequently, teachers have lost opportunities to facilitate learner involvement in learning to scaffold the development of learner autonomy (Ribbe & Bezanilla, 2013). This is, however, understandable, particularly in the context of the immediate shift in the teaching system and experiencing the ERT. Not only students the teachers are struggling with the rapid changes and adaptation to the new teaching mode and technology (Sundari et al., 2021). While trying to provide the best professional teaching service, they are seemingly in the first stage of being autonomous teachers in controlling and managing online/remote teaching. Syafryadin et al. (2022), before the ERT, most Indonesian teachers were ready to develop learner autonomy in ICT-based English learning; however, they did not prefer to implement online learning activities due to some constraints. As a result, learners, as teachers, perhaps found new teaching experiences. They also faced challenges and difficulties during ERT, such as a lack of online/remote teaching preparation and planning (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020) and technological competence (Sundari et al., 2021). The immediate shift of the teaching system to online learning might create room for teachers and learners to be more autonomous (Ludwig & Tassinari, 2021). As Little (2007) argued, the development of teacher autonomy is a prerequisite for the emergence of learner autonomy in a formal learning environment.

During ERT, the students were required to handle a sudden change of teaching system, were forced to manage online/remote learning with restricted social interactions, and were demanded to maintain their learning performance. Against all odds, with the autonomy support given to them, they build and develop their capacity and practices in initiating, planning, controlling, and owning their online learning. Then after undertaking this for almost 2 years, they are 'reborn' to be more autonomous learners and seem ready for post-pandemic learning situations.

Conclusion

The current study examined and explored the EFL university students' learner autonomy and autonomy support when they confront the ERT system. The findings show that learner autonomy has a positive and significant correlation to autonomy support, and there is a significant difference between the low and high levels of autonomy support toward learner autonomy. Moreover, the students perceive that the conception of learner autonomy has multiple orientations: learning oriented, affection-oriented, capacity-oriented, and cognitive-oriented. Then, they develop and strengthen their autonomy by performing several autonomous acts divided into several dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, social-interpersonal, and technical-technological dimensions of acts. Further, this study also reported that during ERT, some students feel that the autonomy support provided by the teachers is sufficient and optimal; meanwhile, others think the teachers are less supportive of them in promoting autonomy. Additionally, this study also found that the support is in the form of support intrinsic motivation, internalization, personal understanding tone, and student-focused attitude. To be precise, the most

frequent support is the opportunity to make the decision, and providing options and online learning resources is the least frequent support.

This present study was limited to the learning context, which is situated in a learning environment during the implementation of the ERT system from a single and specific perspective. Therefore, the findings should be wisely transferred and critically generalized. As we found that the more significant percentage of contributing factors to learner autonomy relies on other variables, it is highly recommended to figure them out, such as teacher autonomy, motivation, and engagement.

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Conflict of interests
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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