

A New Possibility of Introducing Third Persons' Assessment in a Class – An Experiment to Stimulate Active and Autonomous Learning in the Class

Yukino Amemiya*

Department of Languages, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, India

Abstract – Active Learning has started to be given a greater importance since the late 1970s in the educational field. Moreover, in foreign languages education, Learning Autonomy has been studied from 1990s. Those movements occurred to break away from the traditional methods of teaching and to develop a new educational methodology which encourage learners to learn actively and autonomously so that they can find the way to solve problems by themselves in the society which has started to change rapidly these days as technology evolves.

In the process of Active Learning or Autonomous Learning, the way of assessment also should be reconsidered. In the traditional education, the teacher is the only person who assesses the students' activity. However, when Active Learning or especially Autonomous Learning is introduced in a class, the evaluator can be the students themselves or even a third person as in a person outside of the class as well.

To see the effect of third persons' assessment on the learners' motivation, two Japanese language classes held in EFL-University in 2017 and 2018 were compared, in which the teachers gave students a project work to make videos. In one class the project work was assessed only by the teacher, in the other class they uploaded the videos on YouTube and had the opportunity to observe the reactions from outside the class. Having a questionnaire about those two classes to the students, the effect of the assessment from third persons were observed and the possibility of introducing third persons' assessment as an effective tool to increase learners' motivation and autonomy to study was explored.

Keywords – Active Learning, Autonomous Learning, Learner Autonomy, Third Persons' Assessment, Feedback, Learners' Motivation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, students get feedback or assessment about their activities only from teachers and the grades or marks are decided by the teachers. However, what if the teachers introduce third persons' assessment or feedback into a class? How will be the students' reaction? Is it possible to motivate students by the third persons' assessment?

Since the traditional style of giving the assessment has started to be thrown questions, Active Learning and Learner's Autonomy have started to take an attention in the field of foreign language education. One of the biggest reasons of this movement is that the massive and rapid change of the society caused by the evolution and development of science technology. Originally, school education has the

responsibility to introduce and teach the knowledge of the society which is needed to lead social live outside the student's family or community. In other words, teachers teach WHAT to learn in the traditional school education. However, since the social development is too rapid nowadays, even teachers' knowledge or school curriculums cannot catch up with and cover the new knowledge (Mizogami, 2007). Moreover, because of the development of the Internet and media mediums, people can gain knowledge from outside school very easily nowadays. In fact they need the skill to pick up information which they need from the enormous amount information. For those reasons, the traditional education system, where teachers teach their knowledge to students, has started to face a need of change to such a system that teachers teach HOW to learn rather than WHAT to

learn. In addition, active learning is very useful to reinforce the skill that is gained. For this change of necessities in the educational field, active and autonomous Learning have begun to study.

According to Central Council for Education's Report of Japanese Government (2012), active learning is a general term of teaching/learning method that incorporates learner's participation in active learning unlike unidirectional lecture style of education by teachers. This concept has begun to introduced widely into the primary and secondary education from 1970s to 1980s. In 2012, Japanese government mentioned that active learning is necessary in the higher education too to deal with the society which needs the skill of find problems and solutions in unexpected situations.

Autonomous learning has been developing from the new circumstance of educational field. Especially in foreign language education, learner autonomy has paid a strong attention from the mid-1970s in Europe and became a strong idea of the teaching methodology (Benson, 2006). Fujisawa and Komori (2007) mentioned that an autonomous learner is who can judge what is necessary to learn, set the goal, choose the study materials, monitor oneself and assess oneself. In other words, the learner has to take the whole responsibility of controlling the study or learning schedule and process instead of a teacher. When this sort of learning system is introduced in a classroom, a teacher has to play the role of facilitator.

Considering language education, active and autonomous learning seems to be an effective method because a person cannot learn a language completely in a certain period such as just during compulsory education or university life. Learners have to continue to study the language if they want to develop their language ability more or even maintain the ability especially foreign languages. Therefore, they have to develop a skill to continue learning the language by themselves sooner or later after starting learning a new language. Autonomous learning is the essential skill which is thought to be needed to continue learning a foreign language. One of the important keys of sustaining studying actively or autonomously is assessment. Especially in autonomous learning, the learner may consider from whom get the assessment and feedback apart from self-assessment to get an objective opinion. With some objective feedback and assessment, a learner can find the next problem and set the goal more easily. In addition, this kind of assessment without halo effect can make students study more actively in a class. Therefore, third persons' assessment outside the classroom has a possibility to be a new factor for students to get motivated to learn more actively and autonomously.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCHES

Active learning has already penetrated in Japanese language education for some decades. Nowadays, there are some textbooks such as *Marugoto* which contains various kind of activities like pair work, discussion, presentation, project work, etc. However, apparently reports about applying third persons' assessment in the class has not been founded at least on the Internet. Shibahara (2019) carried out a class activity using a blog as portfolio to observe if blog can be an effective material for autonomous learning in for a Japanese class in Universiti Sains Malaysia. She mentioned that the students got stronger connection with classmates and got motivated more to write blog in Japanese through the interaction by writing comments each other to their articles. Yet, it seemed to be only in the classroom. Therefore, observing the effect of third persons assessment from outside the classroom can be a beneficial experiment.

3. TWO CLASSES TO COMPARE

To observe the effect of third persons' assessment on students' motivation, two Japanese classes are compared. One is Oral Expression class for the first-year students in 2017, the other is Contemporary Japan and Japanese Society class for the second-year students in 2018. Both of the classes were held for the same students. In the former class, students were divided into four groups, given a project work to make a short video in groups related to Japanese conversation. They chose one situation from the options (like inviting a person to a party, refusing an invitation and so on) and had to write two kinds of scripts; one is using polite form and the other is using normal form. After making the script, they took the video by themselves. In the end of the project, teacher collected all videos, showed them in the class and gave assessment and feedback. In the latter class, students were divided into several groups and had to choose one topic related to Japanese culture and society (for example the manners of using chopsticks). They wrote the script, took the video in a certain period and the teacher uploaded the videos on the YouTube. After a certain period, the teacher showed the data of YouTube analytics in the class, and let students to observe their videos and discuss the result of the data of YouTube analytics to improve the next video making. In the end of the project, the teacher gave the assessment and feedback to the students. The difference is that, in the former class, only the teacher assessed them and gave feedback, and on the other hand, there were two types of assessments in the latter class; the teacher's assessment and the data of YouTube analytics. In other words, the teacher was the only person to assess the project work in the former class, the data of YouTube analytics was applied as a third

persons' assessment or feedback in the latter class.

4. OBSERVATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

After the above two activities, the questionnaire was carried out in January 2019 and ten students, who are the whole member of the class, answered it. The aim of the questionnaire is to observe how effective the data of YouTube analytics is to make students study actively and autonomously, and if third persons' assessment has a scope to be a positive factor for active and autonomous learning.

As it is seen in the Table 1, 50 percent of the students feel that teacher's assessment or feedback is strongly helpful to study more actively and 10 percent of the students think that it is more useful than the data of YouTube analytics. On the other hand, only 20 percent of them think that the data of YouTube analytics helps them to be more active. It means that more than half of the students felt teacher's assessment motivated them.

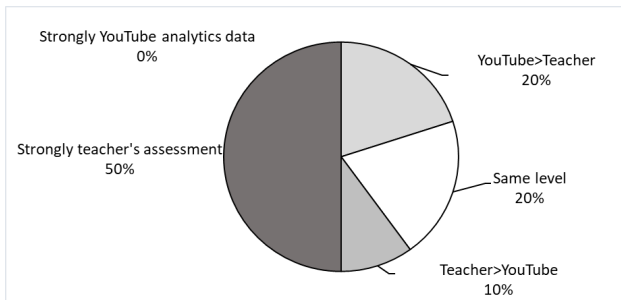


Table 1. 'Which is helpful for you to study more actively?'

Being questioned which is helpful to study more autonomously, 30 percent of the students answered that it is strongly teacher's assessment or feedback and 10 percent said it is more than the data of YouTube analytics. Only 10 percent chose Strongly the data of YouTube analytics as the helpful factor and 20 percent chose the analytics more than teacher's assessment (see Table. 2). Comparing the difference between who shows the positive reaction to teacher's assessment and data of YouTube analytics is only 10 percent. Here it can be said that YouTube analytics could make students boost to study autonomously compared to study actively, which means that the intention of introducing YouTube analytics for autonomous learning is slightly fulfilled.

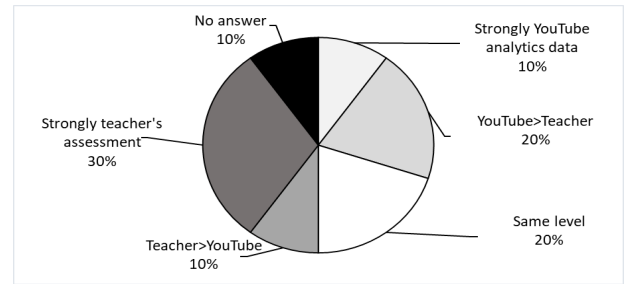


Table 2. 'Which is helpful for you to study more autonomously?'

From the answers of those two questions, it can be said that teacher's assessment and feedback have a strong effect on students' motivation. Yet, they think that the data of YouTube analytics is comparatively effective to study more autonomously.

Next, Students were given nine options as the Table 3 shows to make an order from the most to the least effective factor to make them study more actively. They chose the option 'Getting a good assessment from their teachers' as the top, which is followed by the option 'Communicating about their problems or tasks with their teachers.' Moreover, when students were asked what makes them study more autonomously, communicating with their teacher was the top and communicating with their classmates was the second. According to this result, it seems that the students' consciousness of studying strongly depends on teachers followed by classmates.

Table 3: 'What makes you study more actively/autonomously when you learn Japanese?'

- a. Just studying by myself without any communication or assessment.
- b. Communicating about my problems or tasks with my teachers itself.
- c. Communicating about my problems or tasks with my classmates itself.
- d. Communicating about my problems or tasks with third persons outside the classroom itself.
- e. Communicating about my problems or tasks with my family itself.
- f. Getting a good assessment from my teachers.
- g. Getting a good assessment from my classmates.
- h. Getting a good assessment from my family.
- i. Getting a good assessment from third persons outside the classroom.

However, there is a significant difference about self-assessment between showing the data of YouTube analytics and only being assessed by the teacher. When students got only the teacher's assessment, 60 percent of them answered that

they did not do self-assessment much and 20 percent did not do at all. On the contrary, when they got the data of YouTube analytics, totally 50 percent of the students did self-assessment and only 10 percent did not do. Comparing the answer, the number of students who did self-assessment when YouTube analytics was introduced is 5 times as much as that of when there was only teacher's assessment. Hence it can be said that YouTube analytics provided students a good chance to encourage themselves to do self-assessment, which is one of the important elements of autonomous learning.

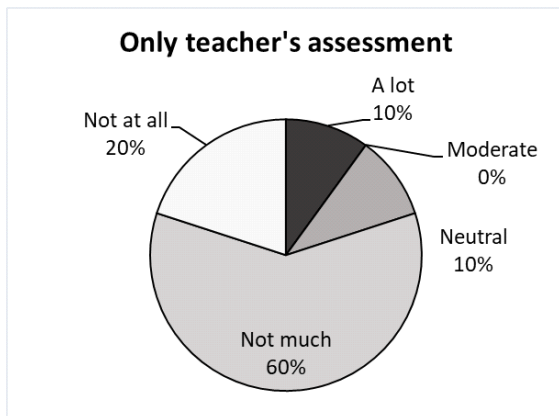
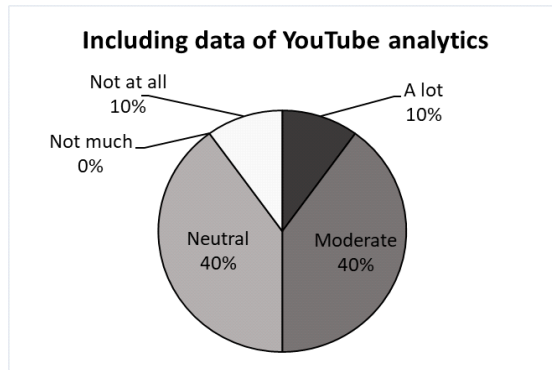


Table 4. 'Did you do self-assessment after finishing your project?'

Moreover, students seem to be aware of the helpfulness of the third persons' assessment for their learning activity. As it is seen on the Table 5 below, 60 percent of the students think that they will be motivated to study actively if any other kind of third persons' assessment is introduced in the class. If the number of students who answered 'Moderate' are included, the total percentage of whom gave a positive answer is 70 percent. Furthermore, as the Table 6 shows, 60 percent of the students think that they will strongly get motivated to study autonomously by third persons' assessment. The percentage of the students who think third persons' assessment is not useful to motivate them was limited to only 10 percent. Therefore, it can be said that students have some expectation that third persons assessment or feedback can be a trigger to make them more active and to start autonomous learning.

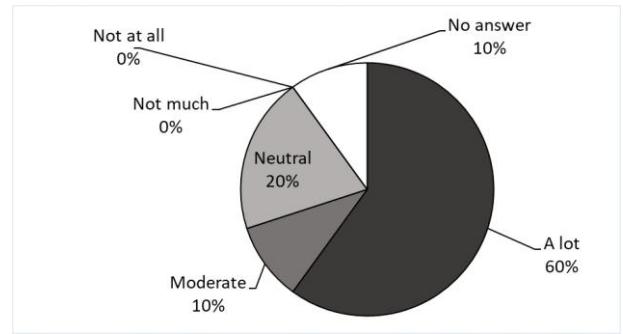


Table 5. 'If any other kind of third persons' assessment is introduced in the class, will you be motivated to study actively?'

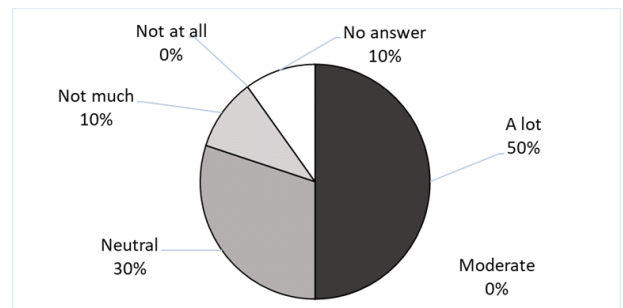


Table 6. 'If any other kind of third persons' assessment is introduced in the class, will you be motivated to study autonomously?'

5. CONCLUSION

According to the observation of the questionnaire, it became clear that students strongly tended to rely on the interactions with teachers, and teacher's assessment or feedback has a strong effect on their motivation of studying actively and autonomously. However, at the same time, when students had an opportunity to get feedback or assessment from third persons, they started to do self-assessment. Moreover, they think that third persons' assessment will be helpful for them to study actively and autonomously.

There can be several reasons for these contradictory answers. First of all, the students might not be conscious of autonomous learning. Therefore, even after they answered that they did self-assessment after seeing the data of YouTube analytics, more than half of the students thought that the data did not help them to study actively or autonomously. The second reason can be that although using YouTube analytics became an opportunity to start self-assessment, the students could not refer to the data to improve their activity, or at least they did not think it useful. The third possibility is that since students is accustomed to put the importance on the teachers' assessment and feedback, they considered it more important than other assessments as usual. Those points have to observe more by doing another observation.

One more considerable point is that the number of examined students were very few because there were only ten students in the class. This observation has to be continued with larger number students to get more accurate statistics.

Considering these points, it can be said that YouTube analytics has some positive effect to students' attitude of studying. Although it did not make an immediate and remarkable change to their active and autonomous learning, it shows that introducing the data of YouTube analytics made students think back on their activity which they did not do with teacher's assessment. Regarding this point, third persons' assessment has a strong potential to produce an environment to start autonomous learning. Moreover, it is necessary to research more about the effect on students of introducing third persons' assessment in a class using or developing other kind of tools and contents so that teacher make students learn more actively and autonomously in the future.

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Corresponding Author

Yukino Amemiya*

Department of Languages, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, India

y.h.amemiya@gmail.com