Linking Language-learning Concepts with Active-learning Concepts in Foreign-language Education

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Abstract

As the emphasis on active learning grows with educational policy reforms in Japan, learner engagement is a prominent issue. High-stakes tests and examinations compel teachers to rely, sometimes heavily, on certain forms of rote drilling that lack potential to stimulate and engage learners in the 'active learning' sense, and, instead, involve a much more passive learning experience. This paper examines intriguing similarities between extracts from literature on active learning and literature concerning L2 output production in language learning contexts. In particular, specific descriptions of processes involved in active learning are similar in a number of ways to the potential learning benefits thought to be made available when producing modified L2 output in response to interlocutor feedback. These parallels are displayed and explained for the purpose of situating definitions of active learning within some of the conceptuality of language learning. Following this, examples of possible styles and formats of language drills are used as a basis for portraying the dichotomy between active and passive learning. It is concluded that more active forms of drilling involving authentic learner production can reveal more about

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the current state of a learners' interlanguage and provide more opportunities to attend to their

needs regarding the development of this interlanguage.

Keywords*: active learning; foreign language education; language learner output production*

     Public-school teachers in Japan are faced with the challenging task of figuring out ways

to implement actions aimed at fulfilling the educational goals laid out by the Ministry of

Education. The latest finalized revision of the MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology) 'Courses of Study', due to be implemented in 2022, has 'active

learning' as a prominent aspect of their suggested pedagogical philosophy (McMurray, 2018, p.

28). Understanding the purposes and potential value of active learning and how to make it a

significant and effective part of a given syllabus are key teacher development priorities that need

to somehow permeate into the world of practicing teachers in the field. In this paper, it is argued

that teachers must think of what 'active learning' means in terms of the particular subject they

teach, and how to create or use forms of active learning that actually develop skills specific to

that subject. The subject area of concern for this paper is foreign language education (typically

'English', or '英語' (*eigo*), in Japanese public education).

     It is possible for MEXT's 'active learning' to be refined into concrete concepts that could

be applied for the purposes of classroom language learning. Therefore, this paper discusses the

potential values of finding parallels between second language acquisition concepts from the field

of applied linguistics and some of the educational and learning concepts present in more general

literature on active learning, or that of disciplines other than language learning. These concepts

will be explained in more detail, followed by a display of the parallels with explanations.

Considering the nature of such parallels could potentially inform methodology on applying

active learning conceptuality in the language classroom more pertinently. This will also be discussed.

Observation of variations in an educational concept across disciplines has been done before. Moore (2013) interviewed teachers from different departments at a university in Australia, finding that 'critical thinking', generally a broadly defined concept, manifests in different forms to serve different functions depending on the discipline to which it is applied (p. 20). When defining active learning, variation may similarly occur in this way. It is defined by Prince (2004) as "any instructional method that engages students in the learning process" (p. 223), which is contrasted with the traditional lecture, "where students passively receive information from the instructor" (p. 223). 'Core elements' stated are "student activity and engagement in the learning process" (p. 223). This is quite a general definition, and, in light of Moore's findings above, it is suggested here that more discipline specific concepts, such as processes thought to be beneficial to language learning, could be applied to form more refined and pertinent constructs for how active learning can manifest within the given disciplinary context. This will become evident as the discussion in this paper develops.

The concept to be associated with active learning here will be Swain's (1985) 'output hypothesis' and the relevant studies and discussions that have stemmed from it over the years. The reason for this focus is that a series of intriguing parallels exist between the experience for language learners of producing what Swain (1985) calls 'pushed output' (to be explained further in following sections) and what learners are said to experience in more general literature on active learning. After these parallels have been displayed and explained, some implications for improving on certain types of language practice drills commonly used in public English education in Japan will also be suggested. Although the concepts and methods suggested in this

article are aimed at improving language skills in mainstream middle and secondary schools, it is hoped that professionals affiliated more closely with tertiary education or other forms of adult education will take interest in this issue; developing young learners' capacity for self-expression and engagement in 'active' styles of learning would likely connect with their potential to meet the demands of future levels of education awaiting them as they may acquire a more versatile set of linguistic and communicative skills.

Parallels Between the Output Hypothesis and Active Learning

Authentic Production as an 'Active' Process

The 'output hypothesis' (Swain, 1985), in simple terms, is the idea that not only processing input, but also producing output entails opportunities for language acquisition. This concerns mainly the sort of L2 output that a learner creates on their own volition in attempts at authentic meaning making, and not the sort of output involving reproduction of memorized phrases or switching between predetermined lexical items in pattern practice drills. The former will heretofore be referred to as 'authentic production' throughout this paper. Considering the implications for cognitive effects of this is intriguing. Expanding on Swain and Lapkin's (1995) contrasting of input comprehension, involving more semantic processing, and output production, involving a greater need for syntactic processing, Izumi (2003) uses the terms 'grammatical decoding' and 'grammatical encoding' to describe the same process, with 'encoding' implying the piecing together of linguistic elements to formulate a message (p. 183). Thus, authentic production can be thought to instigate a form of monitoring in which a learner checks what they are producing against their existing declarative knowledge of the language (p. 184). This can

even involve self-initiated corrections at the internal level while contemplating an utterance prior to writing or saying it (Sato & Lyster, 2012, p. 595).

Trying out these assumptions in a communicative setting, termed "testing hypotheses" by Swain and Lapkin (1995, p. 384), adds an additional dynamic, interaction, to the set of learning benefits made available through output production. With both written and spoken output, it is from interlocutors that a learner can receive evidence of the accuracy of their own interlanguage and 'hypotheses' about the L2. The presence of an interlocutor instigates opportunities for negotiation of meaning, and Swain (1985) makes the distinction between "simply getting one's message across [, which] can and does occur with grammatically deviant forms and sociolinguistically inappropriate language", and being 'pushed' to convey a message "precisely, coherently and appropriately" (pp. 248-249). In this sense, producing output becomes a form of exposing one's own ideas, expecting to receive some kind of feedback that in turn hints as to how those trialed ideas ('hypotheses') can be refined and improved on. Feedback can range from a confused look in casual conversation to a teacher's explanation in the language classroom. Pica et al. (1989) found that through negotiation of meaning when paired with native speakers on certain tasks, learners at times modified their output semantically and morphosyntactically in response to clarification requests or confirmation checks. Such situations in which a speaker or writer feels pressured by the communicative situation to produce grammatically accurate, lexically appropriate utterances, can be referred to as 'pushed output' (Swain, 2008). A whole series of processes and effects stems from this 'pushed output' concept, which has been studied and tested in various ways over the years (Izumi, 2003; Russel, 2014; Sato & Lyster, 2012; Shehadeh, 2002), but a very basic representation of what authentic production *can* (but does not necessarily always) instigate is as in 'Figure 1: Output and Modified Output in Response to

Feedback' below. This figure shows a three part process that represents the type of 'pushed output' situation that this paper focuses on.

Figure 1

Output and Modified Output in Response to Feedback

Step 1 ------------------------------> Step 2 --------------------------> Step 3		
Learner tries to produce a linguistically accurate message in the TL	Interlocutor provides feedback in the form of: -signal that there is a problem -direct correction of the mistake (recast) -hint or suggestion as to how to refine the message or fix the problem	Learner tries again to produce the SAME message but 'modifies' it in attempt to increase linguistic accuracy, precision of meaning, thoroughness of expression, sociolinguistic appropriacy, etc.

Further speculation by Sato and Lyster (2012) brings forth the notion that being prompted to re-attempt formulation of an utterance activates another sequence of monitoring in addition to the monitoring used to construct the initial formulation. This monitoring, being enhanced by the insight made available through the feedback, could lead to the automatization of more accurate grammatical knowledge (p. 595). 'Pushed output', then, can be connected to classroom practices in that a teacher's approach to selecting and implementing tasks can influence how *actively* learners engage in the above processes, ideally reaping the implied learning benefits.

The Parallels and Their Explanations

In the following, parallels between different aspects of more general active learning concepts and concepts discussed specifically in literature on L2 output production are portrayed.

The theme of each parallel is explained and these are accompanied with tables that align excerpts from the literature in both disciplinary fields. The themes, in order, are Reflection, Construction of Knowledge, Construction of Meaning, Invention/Productive Failure and Corrective Feedback, and Articulation.

Reflection

Engaging in the process of attempting to accurately convey meaning in a target language brings about reflection on the way that language works. The general definition of active learning also states that students reflect on ideas and how those ideas are used. In this way, the mental processes described are very similar, as will also be seen with the other themes to follow in this section. Table 1 below portrays parallels in the literature.

Table 1

Reflection

Parallel: Reflection	
General Active Learning (sciences, mathematics, etc.)	"The process of having students engage in some activity that forces them to reflect upon ideas and how they are using those ideas" (Michael & Modell, 2003, p. 18, cited in Michael, 2006, p. 160)
L2 Output Production	"when they encounter difficulties in producing the target language …learners sometimes engage in grammatical analysis which, though not essential to comprehension, is essential to accurate production" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, pp. 383-384) "in Swain's (1997) study, production enabled learners to notice problems in their IL system, prompting them to reflect consciously on the language they were producing and to negotiate collaboratively about TL forms and structures

	until a satisfactory resolution was reached." (Shehadeh, 2002, p. 624, reference to Swain, 1997 included in reference list)

Construction of Knowledge

Be it 'testing mental models' or 'testing hypotheses', the different authors below refer to quite similar processes. "Repairing … models that appear to be faulty" (Michael, 2006, p. 160) resembles restructuring the linguistic form of output as a reaction to feedback. Table 2 below portrays relevant parallels in the literature.

Table 2

Construction of Knowledge

Parallel: Construction of knowledge	
General Active Learning (sciences, mathematics, etc.)	The process has been described as "building mental models of whatever is being learned, consciously and deliberately testing those models to determine whether they work, and then repairing those models that appear to be faulty." (Michael & Modell, 2003, p. 61, paraphrased in Michael, 2006, p. 160)
L2 Output Production	"they test hypotheses about the second language, experiment with new structures and forms, and expand and exploit their interlanguage resources in creative ways" (Pica et al., 1989, p. 64) "learners may monitor their own errors during and after the production process" (Sato & Lyster, 2012, p. 594) "prompts … are effective both for developing accurate knowledge by restructuring their already existing knowledge and for enhancing the practice effect by pushing them to self-correct" (Ranta & Lyster, 2007, paraphrased in Sato & Lyster, 2012, p. 594)

Construction of Meaning

As learners have to assemble bits of knowledge with their own ideas to produce their own explanations in active learning, L2 production also involves the piecing together of known linguistic elements to 'construct meaning'. They both make meaning through utterance formulation and further comprehension of the underlying linguistic rules governing those formulations. Table 3 below portrays relevant parallels in the literature.

Table 3

Construction of Meaning

Parallel: Construction of meaning	
General Active Learning (sciences, mathematics, etc.)	"Learning involves the active construction of meaning by the learner." (Michael, 2006, p. 160)
L2 Output Production	"[Through writing and editing,] students engaged in mental processing that may have generated linguistic knowledge that is new for the learner, or consolidated existing knowledge" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 384) "… Grammatical decoding … may effectively be bypassed in the course of input comprehension … In production, on the other hand, the speaker is responsible for message generation and formulation that requires grammatical encoding." (Izumi, 2003, p. 183) "(When producing modified output) … the learner may sometimes be forced into a more syntactic processing mode" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 372)

Invention/Productive Failure and Corrective Feedback

Productive failure, put simply, is a learning design that involves having learners make an educated guess at how a particular problem can be solved, followed by analyzing the canonical method. As quoted below, it was found that although learners initial 'invented' methods were often faulty, this contemplative process *followed by* exposure to the canonical method deepened their understanding of relevant concepts and improved performance (Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2011). The literature on L2 output production describes very similar processes, as portrayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Invention/Productive Failure and Corrective Feedback

Parallel: The 'invention'/'productive failure' active learning approach, and its resemblance to the experience of receiving and following up on corrective feedback in L2 interaction	
General Active Learning (sciences, mathematics, etc.)	"In the generation and exploration phase, the focus is on affording students the opportunity to leverage their formal as well as intuitive prior knowledge and resources to generate a diversity of solutions for a complex problem; a problem that targets concepts that they have not yet learnt … the generation and exploration phase provides the necessary foundation for developing deeper understanding of the canonical concept during direct instruction (Kapur, 2009, 2010a/b; Schwartz & Martin, 2004)" (Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2011, p. 2812) "As hypothesized, the PF [productive failure] design invoked learning processes that not only activated but also differentiated students' prior knowledge (as evidenced by the diversity of student generated solutions)." (Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2011, p. 2814) "one explanation for the benefits of failed invention attempts is that *the invention process is essentially a process in which students acquire requirements for a valid method*" (Roll et al., 2011, p. 2828) "The invention process helps students identify concrete, and possibly explicit, requirements, and examples of successful and unsuccessful ways to achieve

	them. Later, during show-and-practice, students can complete the puzzle by noticing how the canonical method satisfies these requirements. *Comprehension of instruction involves a mapping process in which students can identify how each component of the canonical method fills a certain function.*" (Roll et al., 2011, p. 2828)
L2 Output Production	"when, as a result of producing the target language, learners 'notice' a problem, they conduct an analysis leading to modified output. That is, noticing may occur because of either internal or external feedback which may prompt, for example, the generation of alternatives and assessment of them through simple inspection through to complex thinking. When learners cannot work out a solution, they may turn to input, this time with more focused attention, searching for relevant input. Or, they may work out a solution, resulting in new, reprocessed output. What goes on between the first output and the second, we are suggesting, is part of the process of second language learning" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 386) "the production of output may serve as an internal priming device for learners to notice the linguistic features that they lack in their interlanguage knowledge during exposure to subsequent target language input" (Izumi, 2002, paraphrased in Russel, 2014, p. 26) "Though the optimal level of consciousness while processing input is debatable, it is claimed that CF (corrective feedback) gives learners an opportunity to make a cognitive comparison between their interlanguage and the given input (R. Ellis, 1994) and to engage in focused input analysis (N. Ellis, 2005)." (Sato & Lyster, 2012, 593)

Articulation

Discussing active learning, Weimer (2012), below, speaks in general of the benefits of articulation. Authentic production *being* articulation in and of itself seems to function as a means of learning about a target language, if Weimer's statements are taken heed of. Not only do learners practice saying things, but they also have the opportunity to understand the things they are saying more deeply through attempts at articulation. The L2 output related quotations in Table 5 below reveal how Weimer's claims may be true.

Table 5

Articulation

Parallel: articulation	
General Active Learning (sciences, mathematics, etc.)	"Meaningful learning is facilitated by articulating explanations, whether to one's self, peers, or teachers. Students learn to speak the languages of disciplines when they practice speaking those languages. That's part of what this principle involves, but it is also true that articulating an answer, an idea, or a level of understanding aids in learning. The speaking or writing makes clear to the learner what they do and don't understand, and/or their understanding deepens as they frame a description that is meaningful to them." (Weimer, 2012)
L2 Output Production	"Our claim is that on each occasion, students engaged in mental processing that may have generated linguistic knowledge that is new for the learner, or consolidated existing knowledge" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 384) "a learner's use of communication strategies can function to stretch an IL system beyond its current limits, resulting in free variation as the learner tests new hypotheses in the search for an appropriate word or structure" (Tarone, 1993, p. 18, cited in Swain & Lapkin 1995, p.374) "learners become sensitive to what they can and cannot say in the TL, leading to their reappraisal of their IL capabilities" (Izumi, 2003, p. 186)

Implications for Classroom Language Learning

Consideration of the Nature of Language Practice Drills in Light of the Conceptuality Behind the 'Active Learning' Aspects of L2 Output Production

According to Linton et al. (2014), multiple meta-analyses of active learning research contain evidence that it is consistently effective in increasing student learning. If output
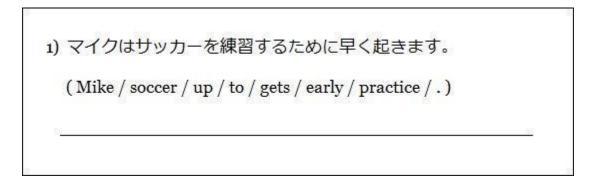
production related hypotheses closely coincide with the tenets of active learning, the value of eliciting L2 output in the classroom can be considered in terms of its active learning aspects, and, conversely, active learning designs for language acquisition purposes could be derived from the assumed beneficial features of 'pushed' output situations. Here, the particular context of middle and high school public English education in Japan is considered, focusing mainly on the appropriacy of certain types of language practice drills.

Some forms of drills this author has worked with in secondary school classrooms in Japan include single sentence cloze activities either aimed at grammatical pattern or vocabulary drilling, rearranging of jumbled sentences, direct translation, or rewriting of sentences as positive, negative, interrogative, in a different tense, and so on. Types specific to certain grammatical forms also exist, such as the combining of two sentences into one using a relative pronoun, subordinating conjunction, or infinitive clause. What is consistent among all of the drills mentioned here, though, is that the content is predetermined. Necessary structural elements of a given sentence, other than the structural aspect being drilled, are all present. Thus, the learner is not especially required to consider formal and/or semantic relationships between other parts of speech and the one being drilled, or to decide which syntactical elements and arrangements are necessary to accurately express meaning. Translation drills, in which learners are given a sentence in L1 and told to write it in L2, may require more involved decision making than the other types, yet it is rare that translation drills are not situated in a thematic lesson on one grammar point (for example, 'verbs followed by gerunds'), making the required elemental and organizational (i.e. grammatical and syntactical) content of the target answer highly predictable. On the contrary, having to create the content as opposed to having it predetermined, learners may have an opportunity to find out whether the messages they create can even be

appropriately expressed using a target grammar point or not. Along with translation drills, the jumbled sentence type, mentioned above, is another example of how drills can lack a communicative *attempt* (i.e. 'hypothesizing') aspect. As explained in the previous sections, incorporating certain degrees of learner-conceived communicative *attempt* into drilling practices could make the drilling process more 'active'. Figure 2 (below) represents how a jumbled sentence drill might look on a worksheet.

Figure 2

Format of a jumbled sentence drill used in public secondary schools in Japan

1) マイクはサッカーを練習するために早く起きます。

(Mike / soccer / up / to / gets / early / practice / .)

_____

The point here is not that such a drill is useless: it may be effective in helping learners understand structure and improve comprehension skills, however it does not require that the learner use the language to create meaning. Instead of being given all the elements in the formulation above, if learners were directed to "say something using the expression 'to practice' ", it would resemble more what L2 users might need to do in real life, which is to apply known L2 elements to a communicative situation. The learner would be responsible for considering the nature of message that is expressed effectively and accurately using a 'to + verb' infinitive. If a student were to write, "I was go to park to practice run", the thought process might change from

"Where do I put the 'gets' and the 'early'?" to "How can I use this type of infinitive to express my reason for going to the park?", or "For what purpose, and what kind of message, can I use the phrase 'to practice'?". As this may be challenging with new forms and structures being studied, it is not suggested here that jumbled sentence drills be replaced in entirety, but that they be supplemented with authentic output drills to expand on the nature of learning and application of L2 knowledge that the learner is exposed to.
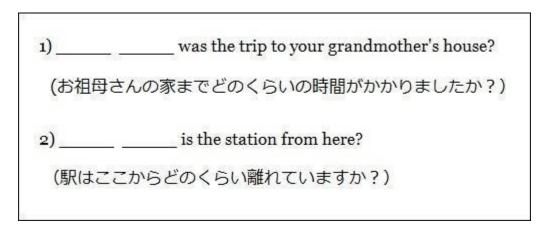
It is possible that a given officially published drill book that a teacher may acquire might contain some unique and effective exercises for students, and there is also the issue that changing the style of all drill books used in Japan would be quite an involved endeavor. However, in this author's experience, it is also common for teachers to make their own drill worksheets to incorporate textbook vocabulary and themes, or to prepare for tests which the teachers also make themselves. This shows that teachers do have some leeway and authority to decide how they train their students, and it therefore may be worthwhile to investigate how some portion of the drilling materials and time used in classrooms might be modified to involve potentially more effective learning processes.

The following explains in greater detail how another particular type of drill this author has worked with in secondary school classrooms can be modified to become more 'active' by incorporating authentic L2 production and teacher feedback in the classrom. In this form of drill, certain words or phrases previously covered in lessons using the textbook are targeted for review. A full sentence in L1 (Japanese) is paired with its English version with the targeted word or phrase missing, as a blank space. Examples of the answers, or the linguistic elements to be recalled by learners, are 'How long ~', 'should be ~', 'There is ~', and so on. Almost any linguistic element could be targeted in this way. A single drill, then, could be '_____ _____

was the trip to your grandmother's house?' (Answer: 'How long'). Figure 3 below represents how this might look on a worksheet.

Figure 3

Format of a cloze drill used in public secondary schools in Japan

1) _____ _____ was the trip to your grandmother's house?

(お祖母さんの家までどのくらいの時間がかかりましたか？)

2) _____ _____ is the station from here?

(駅はここからどのくらい離れていますか？)

A drill such as this can be completed with relatively little engagement on the learner's part. The learner can easily overlook the need for and positioning of the copular 'be' verb, the syntactical placement of 'How long', and whether or not the predicate is even semantically relevant to the subject. It is only required that they identify which part of the L1 translation matches the blank spaces and recall the words or phrase from memory or just look them up on a textbook page that the drill is based on, if available. Even having explicitly studied past tense 'be' verbs and question words earlier in the syllabus, this drill provides little evidence of whether or not such elements have been incorporated into the learner's interlanguage. The learner may be capable of comprehending the content, yet there is no evidence of their capacity to produce a formulation of similar complexity on their own accord. The cloze drill above therefore has little to do with measuring or developing language proficiency, which means it arguably does not

effectively foster a practical understanding of the phrase 'How long' and how it can be used to coherently inquire as to the length of time of something.

Turning a drill like this around to require more authentic production by the learner may provide grounds for triggering more involved mental processes. Learners could be given *only* the phrases, such as 'How long ~', 'should be ~', etc., and directed to use them to write sentences about *anything* they want. What learners do, then, is imagine something they might ask the length of (if the prompt is 'How long ~'), determine lexical items that express the intended meaning, and attempt to situate them among other necessary and properly inflected structural elements, all in a syntactically appropriate format. Knowing that their teacher will provide feedback, they can test hypotheses (Swain & Lapkin, 1995), recording their assumptions about how the language works in writing on paper to have them evaluated by the knowledgeable interlocutor. A teacher could then engage in quick discussions with learners, providing prompts or hints that push (Swain, 2008) the learners to further refine or enhance their initial productions, moving closer to accurate, coherent target language use. It is not only having learners decide on and create the utterances that makes this task more 'active', but also all of the cognitive activity involved in formulating the utterances and modifying them after having received feedback.

Implementing Active Learning Within the Contextual Limitations

Teachers are required to cover all the grammar rules and vocabulary needed to perform on high stakes term tests and entrance exams, which, for the most part, assess declarative knowledge. Because of this, they may feel that a form of active learning such as that suggested here is not appropriate when the big test date draws closer and closer. In response to this same issue in terms of active learning in college classrooms, Faust and Paulson (1998) point out the

folly in merely adhering to mandated coverage demands: "Either teach more material and have students learn less, or teach less material and have students learn more of it …", and they go on to argue that "students always will be better educated if we expose them to slightly less content but require them to engage the material" (pp. 17-18). As it would be overly idealistic to attempt to completely reform the current state of foreign language education in Japan, it is suggested here that perhaps some more active drilling methods could be fit in along with the established approaches. With the heavily packed syllabus, it may be too inefficient to expect teachers to extensively implement what this paper discusses. However, the seeming benefits of eliciting authentic production of full sentences *for the purpose of attending to linguistic accuracy* should be acknowledged. Highly controlled drilling and assessment arguably do not provide a complete depiction of L2 proficiency. Although such drilling may be beneficial to certain extents, part of what it elicits is merely an abstract, and, at times, impractical proficiency in regurgitating declarative knowledge to fill in the test mold with all the necessary rote memorized ingredients. In contrast to this, the value of authentic production is evident in Swain and Lapkin's (1995) depiction of what it represents: when learners refine attempts at meaning-making in response to feedback, "the modified, or reprocessed, output *represents the leading edge of the learner's interlanguage* [emphasis added]" (p. 374). When a learner is pushed and struggles to apply their linguistic resources, what they produce is like an imprint of their personal mental representation of how the L2 works. When a learner fails to include a 'be' verb in a sentence, even though 'be' verbs were already 'covered' much earlier in the syllabus, the teacher should see this as evidence that their student's understanding of 'be' verbs has not really solidified in their mind yet. If the aim of the curriculum is to foster foreign language communicative skills, evidence of how much of the target language students can *use*, as opposed to how much of it they *know*, should help

determine the nature of education required to foster a more practical form of L2 proficiency. Arguably, approaches to assessment should also follow suit.

Conclusion

The contrast between rote drilling and authentic production portrayed here is an embodiment of the dichotomy between passive and active learning. The alteration in methodology for drilling target language items presented in this paper is just one example of a kind of simple fix teachers could implement to add more active learning to their repertoire. Teachers can also extend this concept beyond the type of task presented here and apply it to the design or modification of other types of linguistically oriented tasks. If reforms are being made, as promoted by MEXT, to put learning in the learners' hands and foster their critical thinking skills and capacity to express information and ideas (McMurray, 2018), then hopefully this paper can provide a starting point from which to determine how active learning can permeate more thoroughly into foreign language education. In this paper, examples of teacher-made worksheet drills are provided, yet further detailed analysis of official materials used in the Japan public language education context could be the next step in research as a follow up to this. The main purpose of this paper has been to focus on detailed descriptions of what active learning is and how this can be related to language learning. It is hoped that this may serve as a conceptual basis upon which further considerations and investigations can be made regarding the actual classroom materials and procedures. As MEXT continues to innovate on what it expects of Japan's youth and of the teachers responsible for fostering it in them, constructs for actual implementation will

have to be developed thoroughly enough that they are appropriate to the disciplines they are applied to.

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