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Teaching Writing: not correcting but communicating. Japanese as a Case Study.

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Contents

Abstract

This action research examines teaching writing in Japanese without corrective feedback. I adopted active learning in my Japanese classes (first semester in A.Y. 2020/21) for master's students in Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The students were required to develop a report throughout the semester while reflecting on peers' reactions in group activities. However, I did not provide any corrective feedback to the students' drafts against their expectations toward a native Japanese teacher. The objective was to encourage them to express their own thoughts in their own Japanese. The hypothesis behind this is that corrective feedback may reinforce the idea that only native teachers know “the right answer” for Japanese writing while the students do not. Besides discouraging finding their own expressions, corrective feedback may allow students to accept uncritically what teachers say. Through group activities, some participants gradually shifted their values from grammatical accuracy to originality of writing and active engagement with their peers. They also increased awareness that students can affect the writing of their peers and their own, decentralizing the native teacher's role. The analysis shows how such activities transformed the relationship between teachers and students, from a stereotyped one where native teachers correct and students are corrected, into a more “reflexive” one, where the students' actions and thoughts affect each other, and teachers action as well, in the classroom.

Keywords: Writing, Critical Pedagogy, Corrective Feedback, Japanese, Active Learning

Teaching Writing: not correcting but communicating. Japanese as a Case Study

1.Introduction

This action research examines teaching writing in Japanese without corrective feedback for master's degree students who majored in Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in Italy. In this university, I am a Foreign Language Assistant (Collaboratrice ed Esperta Linguistica: CEL), which is equivalent to a mother tongue teacher specialist. I planned and conducted a writing course of Japanese where I did not offer any error corrections on students' writing during the semester. Teaching writing without offering corrective feedback was conceived during my previous interactions with students majoring in Japanese at this university. The hypothesis that will be examined in this study is that corrective feedback, which is prevalent in Japanese language education, may reinforce a stereotyped relationship where only native-speaker teachers know "correct Japanese" (Hosokawa, 2008; Thomson, 2010) while the students do not. It is therefore also probable that this relationship will discourage students to find their own expressions, but it will make them accept uncritically what teachers say in foreign language education.

Corrective feedback is defined as "any feedback that provides learners with evidence that something they have said or written is linguistically incorrect" (Sheen, 2011, p.2). Several researchers have argued corrective feedback on grammatical errors as efficient means to increase accuracy in production (Ferris, 1997, 1999, 2010; Sheen, 2011; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Brown, 2012), but on the other hand, the negative aspects of corrective feedback were also pointed out. For example, corrective feedback will increase learners' anxiety and, therefore it will make learners' attitudes for writing protective (Hairston, 1986; Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1996). As far as effectiveness for grammatical accuracy is concerned, the debate is still open. However, it is beyond the scope of this study

to examine the effectiveness of corrective feedback.

The thesis seeks to reveal the students' belief in corrective feedback: how the belief is constructed, maintained, and can be changed through the learning process. It is reported that learners have strong beliefs in foreign language learning, which are usually constructed through previous learning experience (Horwitz, 1985). The impact of learners' beliefs is to decide learners' attitudes toward approaches that teachers adopt (Dörnyei, 2005). Regarding writing, learners tend to believe that they could not successfully acquire foreign languages without the teachers' correction (Leki, 1991). And due to this high expectation for corrective feedback, teachers have continued to offer corrective feedback, sometimes under pressure to be a "good teacher" (Hairston, 1986; Leki, 1991). On the other hand, as Leki (1991) suggested, teachers are also satisfied with their role to provide corrections as educational activities, and it is therefore probable that both teachers and students have constructed, maintained, and reinforced a stereotyped relationship between them: teachers correct and students are corrected.

Having critically examined corrective feedback, I planned the writing course to transform this relationship, from a stereotyped one where native-speaker teachers correct and students are corrected, into a more reflexive one, where the students' actions and thoughts affect each other in the classroom. The course was planned based on the practices of Mariotti at Ca' Foscari University (Mariotti, 2016; Caddeo, Ligabue, Mariko & Nishida, 2019; Mariotti, 2020a), which emphasizes the process of interacting with others for discovering their own thoughts and their own words in Japanese. Following the practice of Mariotti, the students of the course that I planned also engaged in their learning actively: They wrote a report on the theme of their own choice while reflecting on the interactions with their classmates.

The research question of the thesis is: Does a writing course without corrective feedback contribute to transforming the fixed relationship between native-speaker teachers and students? And two sub-research questions are: 1) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the student to actively engage in their learning and writing?; 2)Does the course without corrective feedback promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese?

The research also shows the process in which I acted against student's expectations for a native-speaker teacher while redefining the role of native-speaker teachers in the classroom. Several studies have already challenged the concept of a native speaker that assumes one and only correct way of speaking and writing exists (Paikeday, 1985; Cook, 1999; Byram, 2008). Instead of idealizing native speakers as a model in foreign language learning, teachers can see the learners as "complete individual" (Byram, 2008, p.58) and "social agents" (Council of Europe, 2020, p.21) who can actively engage in the construction of the meaning in the classroom. In this study, my "practical philosophy of education" (Elliott, 2015, p.8) was manifested as stopping corrective feedback as well as other instructions that would enforce that native speaker-teachers would know right answers for the students' writing.

Less diversity of the participants of the course can be seen as a limit of this thesis. All the participants of the course were first-year students of master's degree who had already studied Japanese for at least three years, and this will possibly provoke the criticism that only "advanced" students could continue to write without being corrected by a teacher. This research would not directly answer this doubt, but there were already several attempts to challenge the concept of level in Japanese language education (Alessandrini, 2020; Mariotti, 2020a). Project ZERO is one of the attempts in which the students communicated in

Japanese, even though they had little background in Japanese (Ichishima, 2020; Mariotti & Ichishima, 2017). These attempts were consistent with the aim of my course because learners are not empty, nor imperfect, they can communicate in Japanese if they have something inside themselves to tell others.

The structure of the thesis consists of six chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 presents the previous studies on corrective feedback on writing in foreign language education. It will also review the literature of critical and transformative pedagogy and practices to analyze corrective feedback as a classical way of transmitting knowledge from teachers to students. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of research and the design of the writing course. The chapter also provides basic information on Japanese language education at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in Italy. Before investigating the course, in Chapter 4 I try to analyze the impact of online education which was introduced during the pandemic of Covid-19. Chapter 5 divides the course into three phases: 1) the initial phase; 2) the middle phase and; 3) the final phase and analyzes how the students engaged in their writing process in each phase. The final chapter analyzes the results of the course focusing on how the students transformed their objective of interacting and writing in Japanese through the course activities.

Finally, I want to explain briefly the definition of the terms in this thesis. Throughout this thesis, the term, *teacher*, will be used to refer to my role in the course while *the writing course or the course* will be used to refer to the Japanese language exercise that I planned and conducted. Officially, my role in the university is Foreign Language Assistant (Collaboratrice ed Esperta Linguistica: CEL) who is supposed to offer Japanese language exercises (Esercitazione di lingua giapponese). Cibin (2012) explains “the CEL is the mother tongue teacher who supports the foreign language Professor who– in Italy – is generally Italian” (p.

55). He also points out that, although “in Italy, Language Assistants are denigrated by both the law and universities” (p.58), “they teach, i.e. they are teachers of the same value of language Professors” (p.58). I will return briefly to Cibin’s study later (see 2.3.2). The objective of this thesis is to examine how I could transform my role in the classroom by refusing the students' expectations for a native-speaker *teacher.* To clarify this point, I chose to use teacher for my role in the classroom and the writing course for my language exercise which I conducted.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews previous literature on corrective feedback from three perspectives: 1) studies on corrective feedback in foreign language education; 2) the practice of critical and transformative pedagogy; 3) literature of action research in language education. These previous studies are carefully examined to answer three questions:1) how the existing accounts have situated corrective feedback in teaching writing of foreign and second language education including Japanese language education; 2) how the corrective feedback in teaching writing can be analyzed in the context of critical and transformative pedagogy; 3) how action researches have encouraged the teachers who wanted to transform their own practices of education.

2.2 Corrective Feedback in Foreign and Second Language Education

2.2.1 Debate on Effectiveness of Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback might be one of the most conventional teaching activities in foreign language writing education, but there is no general agreement on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in previous studies. Corrective feedback from teachers to students has been controversial in research in foreign and second language teaching (Sheen, 2011). The

studies on corrective feedback in Japanese language education have also developed mostly based on the fruit of research in education of English as a foreign or second language (Ishibashi, 2002, 2005; Hirose, 2007). Overall, the previous research on corrective feedback can be categorized into two according to their scope of research: 1) research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in foreign language acquisition and 2) research on both learner and teacher perspectives on corrective feedback. Scholars have attempted to answer if corrective feedback is effective in increasing the accuracy of foreign language production, and if so how teachers should best provide it. However, the researchers have not reached an agreement so far on the effectiveness of error correction in improving the quality of writing or for language acquisition nor the best strategies of corrective feedback either. Despite this, many foreign language teachers may consider that providing corrective feedback is their professional responsibility (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Brown, 2012). Moreover, learners also showed a high preference for written feedback from teachers in conventional education (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Leki, 2009). Regarding the learner perspective on corrective feedback, this section will investigate later the studies on learner beliefs (Horwitz, 1988).

Accounts that support corrective feedback argue that teachers should provide corrections on grammatical errors of learners; otherwise, the learners are unable to detect and correct grammatical errors on their own in a foreign language (Ferris, 1999, 2010; Ishibashi, 2005). Even though many teachers do not have a theoretical background, they may conduct error corrections based on this standpoint through their previous teaching experience or intuitions. The scholars have found evidence that corrective feedback on grammatical errors can be an efficient method to increase grammatical accuracy in writing production; however, they also reported that teachers need to carefully and appropriately design how to provide corrective feedback according to the purpose and conditions of the classroom (Ferris, 1997;

Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2011; Brown, 2012). Another account pointed out that the content-based feedback on student's writing increased the quality of writing compared to grammar-based feedback (Kepner, 1991: Oi, Kamimura, Kumamoto & Matsumoto, 2000). So the teacher's viewpoint of feedback may influence the quality of learners' writing.

Several attempts have been made to narrow down which elements of corrective feedback actually correlate with language acquisition. Oikawa and Takayama (2000) concluded that the rewriting process might promote the learners to internalize the grammatical rules that the teachers pointed out. An implication of this is the possibility that receiving corrections is insufficient for learners to improve their writing: The teachers' feedback can be effective only when learners actively engage in their writing process. In terms of students' engagement in revision, peer-feedback was proposed as an alternative to traditional writing education in which teachers usually give feedback only at the final product of writing. Instead of one-sided feedback from teachers, learners can collaborate and exchange opinions with each other for improvement in the process of writing (Tateoka, 2007). However, it was also suggested that peer responses did not make much difference with teacher's feedback in promoting learners to revise their writing (Hirose, 2007).

On the one hand, many scholars attempted to find the most effective way of corrective feedback for foreign language acquisition, but on the other hand, some others concluded that corrective feedback overall affected the student's learning negatively. Their fundamental argument is that emphasis on accuracy can cause students anxiety in foreign language classrooms (Horwitz, 1988). Corrective feedback highlights defects and weakness of students' writing, and therefore, it may increase a student's anxiety, which may block the advancement of foreign language learning and acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Hairston, 1986;

Truscott, 1996). Krashen (1982) explained a negative outcome caused by error corrections from teachers: “error correction has the immediate effect of putting the student on the defensive. It encourages a strategy in which the student will try to avoid mistakes, avoid difficult constructions, focus less on meaning and more on form”. This view was supported by Truscott (1996) who denied any type of error correction on writing in English as L2. On the other hand, Dörnyei (2001) did not deny all the corrective feedback, but he suggested that teachers should provide error corrections selectively to avoid increasing anxiety of learners.

To conclude, the conventional way of corrective feedback, where teachers spot errors and provide corrections, does not seem to be confirmed as the best way to either promote the acquisition of a second language or to helpe learners' improving the quality of writing. The previous research suggests that corrective feedback can be beneficial when it is provided properly in accordance with its purpose and conditions of learners. On the other hand, the counterargument is that corrective feedback will make students focus more on correctness and other external rules, and this will increase learners’ anxiety which can be an obstacle to foreign language acquisition. As we have examined, despite the prevalence of corrective feedback in foreign language classrooms, debates on whether teachers should provide corrective feedback are still open.

2.2.2 Learner Beliefs and Teacher Beliefs about Corrective Feedback

As we have seen, the effectiveness of corrective feedback does not seem to be proved enough. This poses a question: Why do teachers continue to provide corrective feedback and why do learners expect to receive it? Although the researchers have not concluded that error correction from teachers is effective, the corrective feedback seemingly has a significant presence in the classroom of foreign language education. The discrepancy between practices and research outcomes on the effectiveness of specific educational activities may often exist

in the field of foreign language education. Many foreign language teachers may regard providing corrective feedback as to their professional responsibility (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Brown, 2012) and learners also often showed a high preference for written feedback from teachers in foreign language education (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Leki, 1991). No matter how effective or ineffective corrective feedback is, both teachers and students in the classroom seem to support and reinforce the idea that corrective feedback is indispensable in learning.

The previous literature also have attempted to discover the reasons why this discrepancy often exists in foreign language teaching. With respect to corrective feedback, the discrepancy could be attributed to the concept of learner beliefs. Horwitz (1985; 1988) found that language learners constructed and established specific beliefs on how foreign language should be learned. Because the learners often bring these beliefs into the classroom (Horwitz 1985; 1988), understanding what kind of beliefs students hold will be a good strategy for teachers to design their language lessons. It was also discovered that learner beliefs can strongly affect a student's attitude toward language learning, even if the beliefs are scientifically wrong (Horwitz, 1988; Dörnyei, 2001). Moreover, foreign language teachers are not free from these beliefs: Teachers tend to teach a foreign language as they learned in the past without updating the latest theories of language teaching (Horwitz, 1985). As Storch (2013) concluded, the learner's perspective and acceptance for specific teaching activities in language education can be seen as a social product: The learner's attitude can be influenced by teachers' values and any other factors that the learners encounter through the learning process.

In the case of writing, many learners seem to have a belief that they need written corrections from teachers or otherwise they could not successfully acquire foreign languages. As examined earlier, because error corrections demonstrate deficits in learner's writing, this

type of feedback can induce negative emotions in learners and increase their anxiety for language learning (Truscott, 1996). Contrary to this concern, it is reported that learners rather tend to appreciate teachers who spot mistakes in students' writing (Dörnyei, 2001). Learners' high expectation for corrective feedback was observed both in learners of English (Leki, 1991) and in learners of Japanese (Kido, 2005; Iida 2018). In a study of ESL learners, Leki (1991) suggested that the learners who prioritized errorless writing tended to regard teachers' corrective feedback as the most effective support while they underestimated their ESL peers and students of native speakers.

Besides, the prevalence of error corrections also surfaces teacher beliefs in foreign language education. One of them is that good teachers must provide error correction as much as possible, although giving corrections for each student is a time-consuming task. In a study on teacher belief, Lee (2009b) found that teachers conducted error correction, even though they did not always consider that corrective feedback was worth its time and effort. In fact, if the teachers want to stop giving corrective feedback, they can find the research evidence that can support this decision; however, many teachers probably do not make an effort toward this direction. A possible explanation for this might be teacher belief. Lee's analysis (2009a) also indicates that teachers were under pressure to respond to errors and leave feedback comments in student's writing; otherwise, they cannot believe they are a good teacher as students expect. The pressure may also come from the traditional assumption that "students' writing will improve in direct proportion to the amount of time their teachers spend on their papers" (Hairston, 1986, p.117). Responding to the conventional assumption, the teachers may want to fit themselves into an ideal figure of a foreign language teacher. Hairston (1986) further criticized the teachers' attitude as "slave-like" because the teachers accept the assumption and repeat corrective feedback without attempting to change their teaching

practices. Truscott (1996) also strongly criticized the same attitude:

> What students hold a demonstrably false belief about learning, the proper response is not to encourage that belief, but to show them that it is false. In this case, that will mean educating them on the nature of the learning process, on the nonvalue of correction, and correction's harmful effect. Changing student's attitudes is not likely to be a trivial task. Most students come to classes with strong intuitions about the value of corrections. For most students who have taken previous language courses, these intuitions have been reinforced by consistent use of correction in those courses, creating additional difficulties for teachers at the higher level. (p.359)

One of the issues emerging from the analysis of beliefs is the teacher's engagement in reinforcing the belief in corrective feedback. Truscott implied that teachers may often engage in this just because they want to meet the students' expectations or to accept the conventional assumption of ideal teachers (Ushikubo, 2016). Because both teachers and students may have their own unique beliefs constructed through their own personal experiences, it is likely that their beliefs are sometimes not in accordance. Therefore, conflicts of beliefs can be regarded as an issue about teachers' responsibility to initiate how teachers and students can have dialogues to share the visions for learning purposes. (Leki, 1991; Dörnyei, 2001; Lee, 2009a).

On the one hand, the teachers are under pressure to be a good teacher, but on the other hand, teachers themselves may actively contribute to support and maintain the belief that language teachers should provide error corrections of student's writing. Leki's analysis (1991) shows that corrective feedback ensures mutually beneficial solutions for both teachers and learners:

> Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling are concrete, they are relatively easy to attend to, easier for both student and teacher, than responding to requests for

> clarification of an idea or further development or support of a point. Just as teachers who slave over errors in a student's writing may feel some personal satisfaction in the evidence of their hard work that a marked paper may give, students who correct these errors may feel also that their corrections move them that much farther along the path to complete mastery of English. (p.209)

Leki (1991) also found that the learners were not satisfied with teachers' feedback if the teachers only focused on the contents of writing. It could be that teachers actively use corrective feedback as a teaching tool that can satisfy learners instantly, and learners aslo seem to support this teachers' decision. Taken together, this suggests that the students do not expect teachers as counterparts to consult about the contents and negotiate for improvement of the contents of writing. They may rather perceive teachers as a machine that can offer the learners an easy judgment of errors on the writings of learners (Mariotti, 2020b). As Leki (1991) pointed out, content-based feedback can require teachers to spend time and energy because there is no clear-cut standard for good content compared to grammatical rules. By contrast, as long as the teachers give error corrections as the students expect, the teachers can quickly increase students' satisfaction with both their learning and their teachers. It is therefore likely the teachers accept their role as grammar checkers if the students do not appreciate the content-based feedback.

To conclude the reviews on beliefs in corrective feedback, the teachers and the students may have an agreement on the notion that teachers should correct the errors and the students accept them. The learners tend to expect and rely on corrective feedback that teachers give, and no matter how correct or incorrect the students beliefs in corrective feedback are, many teachers seem to accept this expectation and provide corrections. These behaviors seem to be based on the fixed relationship between teachers who correct and

students who are corrected. And consequently, as Leki (2009) pointed out, students become dependent on teachers' corrections to seek their ultimate goal of eliminating grammatical errors.

2.3 Corrective Feedback from Viewpoint of Critical and Transformative Pedagogy

2.3.1 Corrective Feedback in the Fixed Relationship

This section attempts to deepen an issue of students' dependency on error correction pointed out in the previous section. As we have seen, the learners tend to have no-error writing as their principal goal in foreign language learning, and therefore, they become dependent on corrections from teachers as one of the most effective and, probably, instant tools to achieve their goal. The two main questions are: 1) whether teachers should continue corrective feedback although the correction may result in making the students dependent on teachers; 2) whether the teachers should affirm and support their setting goal that premises error-less writing as good writing. The feedback literature intensively investigated to discover the most effective feedback to increase the accuracy of students' writing, but the researchers did not pay much attention to the dynamic of the classroom over corrective feedback and its effect on students (Lee, 2009a). So this section also includes reviewing literature on critical and transformative pedagogy which situate student's autonomy in the context of relationships between teachers and students.

Corrective feedback may deprive the learners of opportunities to govern their own writing. Lee (2009b) claimed that corrective feedback would decrease the responsibility of students because "students' role in correcting mistakes in their writing is minimal; often they do not even have to think because correct answers have been given by the teachers" (p.17). The problem of corrective feedback is that teachers offer solutions to learners before the learners attempt to improve their writing on their own, and this may make the learners

believe that they are unable to write perfectly what they want to say without the teacher's support. On the other hand, the students showed a preference for corrective feedback because they are provided with the right answers by teachers. In other words, the learners may prefer to be dependent on teachers and to be passive in their learning. Another research pointed out that Japanese lessons where teachers unilaterally instructed grammatical rules satisfied the students compared to the Problem-solving education, which emphasized critical thinking and active engagement of the students in their learning (Alessandrini, 2019). So students prefer to be passive in the classroom, and this tendency is consistent with the learner's preference for grammatical correction from teachers. In fact, I often observed uncritical passiveness in the learners who asked me to provide them corrective feedback. They preferred to be given the correction, and they did not even attempt to negotiate with me probably because they tend to be satisfied with being given the error corrections.

In the light of critical and transformative pedagogy, corrective feedback can be analyzed as an educational activity based on the fixed relationship in which "the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing" (Freire, 2000, p.73). Freire (2000), whose literature underpins the philosophy of critical pedagogy, conceptualized this dichotomy in education as the banking concept of education. In this structure, teachers conceive students as empty accounts which should receive the knowledge that teachers select to transfer (Freire, 2000). In other words, this dichotomy does not allow the students to be autonomous in their learning. So the success of the banking education is that the students feel comfortable in this relationship, and therefore, they do not even attempt to change their passiveness because they do not know how to doubt the present situation. Freire criticized this type of education because, from a wider perspective, this education only contributes to maintaining and reproducing the system of values that already exists in society and not to transform the fixed

power relationship. The learner's dependency on corrective feedback also seemed to reflect the same structure and dichotomy: Teachers know everything about Japanese while learners know almost nothing about it, and therefore, the learners believe that they have no option but to be corrected by teachers.

Table1

Freire's Analysis (2000) dichotomy between a teacher and students

	Teacher	Students
a	teaches	are taught
b	knows everything	know nothing
c	thinks	are thought about
d	talks	listen-meekly
e	disciplines	are disciplined
f	chooses and enforces his choice	comply
g	acts	have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
h	chooses and enforces his choice	comply
i	confuse the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students	
j	the Subjects of the learning process	more objects
	correct	corrected

Note. The author made the table based on Freire (2000, p.73)

In banking concept of education, the students are basically situated as an object of the teachers' actions, and the students' actions are often described with passive voice in the relationship between teachers and students. The action of corrective feedback can be

perfectly situated in Freire's analysis (2000) of dichotomy (Table 1). The fundamental problem in this structure is that students remain passive: They uncritically accept what teachers decide to transfer to them, and they do not try to negotiate with the teachers before accepting it.

2.3.2 Native-speaker Teachers and "Correct Japanese"

This emphasis on grammatical correctness in writing may exaggerate the dichotomy between teachers who are capable of detecting errors and students who are unable to do so. Particularly, in this context, teachers who are native speaker can be regarded "as an authority whom learners must try to imitate even though they can never quite reach the same level of intuitive knowledge" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p.17), and the native-speaker teachers seem to be perfectly allowed to judge what is acceptable as native-like production in students' writing. Many students may target native-like Japanese as their ultimate goal of error-less writing while teachers also expect the learners to achieve native-like accuracy in their writing. In fact, it is reported that second language researchers defined errors of learners by examining the production of second language learners with those of native speakers, and teachers also judge the success of learners using the same standard (Cook,1999).

However, the concept of a native speaker, which assumes one and only correct way of speaking and writing, does not reflect reality, and therefore, this is a misleading model for language learners (Paikeday, 1985; Cook,1999; Byram, 2008). Denying the concept of "correct Japanese", Thomson (2010) insists that teachers who are native speakers should not define what is correct or incorrect in Japanese for learners. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) categorizes proficiency of learners into six levels (from A1 to C2), but Council of Europe (2020) also emphasized that "the top level in the CEFR scheme, C2, has no relation whatsoever with what is sometimes referred to as the

performance of an idealized ‘native speaker’, or a ‘well-educated native speaker’ or a ‘near native speaker’” (p.37). Instead of idealizing native speakers as a model in foreign language learning, Byram (2008) suggests that “learner should be conceived as a 'complete' individual, not as one who is 'almost' native speaker” (p.58). Byram (2008) also says that his concept of “complete individual learners” shares the essence with the concept of “social agents” (Council of Europe, 2020, p.21) described in the CEFR .

The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) describes that learners as social agents should engage in the series of their learning and its results, which will involve “the interaction between the social and the individual in the process of learning” (p.30). The CEFR also emphasized the nature of interactions and co-constructions of meaning between the users of language, which includes both learners and teachers in the classroom as follows:

> Both the CEFR descriptive scheme and the action-oriented approach put the co-construction of meaning (through interaction) at the centre of the learning and teaching process. This has clear implications for the classroom. At times, this interaction will be between teacher and learner(s), but at times, it will be of a collaborative nature, between learners themselves. (p.30)

What the CEFR aims for is to regard all the participants in the classroom as social agents. This also indicates that the CEFR does not assume teachers should dominate the construction of meaning. At the same time, the learners were not assumed to accept passively the knowledge and meaning selected by teachers nor to wait for the right answers endowed by teachers. The learners should be an actor of communication, and they cannot “have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher” (Freire, 2000, p.73) like in the banking concept of education.

Compared to the concept of learners as social agents, corrective feedback tends to

lack the nature of interactions. In the dichotomy between teachers and students, teachers rather avoid this co-construction of meaning. Instead, they seem to act based on the beliefs: 1) Due to being native Japanese speakers, the teachers can judge what is “correct Japanese” or not; 2) Learners are like an empty bank account in respect of “correct Japanese”; 3) Therefore, the teachers can correct the student's writing, and the students should accept it. The teachers do not doubt that their ability to use Japanese is superior to their learners just because they are native Japanese speaker. However, as we have seen, these beliefs lack critical consideration for learner's diversity, autonomy, and responsibility for their own production. Hosokawa (2012) criticizes unilateral correction as a violation of human dignity in the name of educational activities. He argued that, the teachers should not be allowed to correct the sentences of learners just only because the teachers are native speakers: What they should do before giving the correction on the writing is to ask the learners what they attempted to tell. As Hosokawa said, asking is an initiative action that teachers can take to co-construct the meaning with learners. If the learners are asked for clarifications and further explanations, they will respond to these questions. In society and in daily life, we usually communicate in this way—asking and responding; however, inside the classroom teachers are allowed to define errors, anticipate what the learners “really” want to say, and provide them “right” answers. It might be because, as Hosokawa indicated, teachers have a fixed mindset: “correct Japanese” (Hosokawa, 2008; Thomson, 2010) exists. Because they are native Japanese speakers, they know “correct Japanese”; therefore they can correct without asking the learners.

Although it is observed that foreign language education is moving away from native speakers as a learning target, native-speaker teachers themselves may want to hold on to the traditional model that sees the native speakers as an ultimate goal and as an authority or an

expert of language. The fact of being native speakers may provide native-speaker teachers with a "source of power" (Mariotti, 2020b, p.450) in the classroom. Cibin (2012) suggests that their mother language provides native speakers with a job opportunity to teach in Italy. In fact, universities in Italy employ native speakers as Foreign Language Assistants (Collaboratrice ed Esperta Linguistica: CEL) "who supports the foreign language Professor who– in Italy – is generally Italian" (Cibin, 2012, p.55). As the job title indicated, Foreign Language Assistants are situated as an assistant but not as a teacher in universities in Italy. However, Cibin (2012) points out that Foreign Language Assistants are also central figures of teaching staffs who engage in foreign language education, although both universities in Italy and Italian laws seem to undervalue CELs by calling them assistants (Cibin, 2012). In any case, it can be seen that mother langauge is the fundamental component of the professional status of CELs in Italy, and this situation might be more or less true for native-speaker teachers other than in Italy.

If being native is a "source of power", the idea of "correct Japanese" is seemingly an essential tool to exploit the source of power deriving from being native Japanese. And corrective feedback is one of the possible actions with this tool. The native-speaker teachers may want to protect their exclusive authenticity as a user of "correct Japanese". For the same objective, the native teachers seem to refuse the idea that nonnative Japanese learners can also be autonomous users of Japanese because this will result in decreasing native-speaker teachers' "source of power". In this sense, native-speaker teachers stand on the essentialism that sees "culture" as fixed, pre-defined, and clearly-divisible nature such as Japanese culture or Italian culture (Holliday, 1999). The essentialist teachers will emphasize the premise that the teacher and the students are essentially different by saying "I am Japanese and you are Italian". Moreover, the more the teachers provide the error corrections, the more the students'

expectations for this are met because, as we examined in the previous section, the students like to be corrected. The fixed relationship, in which learners do not doubt the native-speaker teacher authority to correct their Japanese, will maintain the teacher's source of power. The teacher rather can reinforce and increase their power while utilizing it. In this respect, the teachers do not have a strong motivation to foster the students who can critically consider and transform the fixed relationship where the students can maintain passive attitude toward writing in Japanese.

The main argument in this thesis is that teachers should stop giving one-sided correction and, instead, initiate interacting and co-constructing meaning in the process of writing as the CEFR statement also indicates. Corrective feedback relies on essentialism and reinforces this by making the learners dependent on the teachers' corrections. So the native-speaker teachers need to abandon the idea of "we are native Japanese, and therefore we know correct Japanese, and we can correct without asking the learners", even though this requires the teacher to reexamine critically the value of their own existence in the classroom. Otherwise, the existence of native teachers will continue to enforce the students' essential views that distinguish "correct Japanese" and other Japanese (Tanaka, 2006). This will result in making the learners believe that: they cannot find their own words in Japanese; they cannot improve their writing in Japanese by themselves; their classmates cannot have meaningful communication in Japanese only because they are not native Japanese.

As a consequence of the teachers having constructed relationships with the students based on essentialism, the learners also seem to refuse to co-construct the meanings with teachers but perceive them as a machine of grammar correctors (Mariotti, 2020b). In this context, "machine" is a metaphor that the students value teachers only as the function that corrects errors, but they do not see the teachers as counterparts to consult about the contents

and negotiate for improvement of the writing. In this sense, teachers are functionalized and dehumanized by students through corrective feedback. This can be a reason why the students ask me to check grammar errors above all else, and they rarely ask a question that I really wanted to be asked by them: if this writing is interesting to me. Mariotti (2020b) points out that teachers are responsible for making themselves machines because teachers have attempted to appear that they know every rule about Japanese and they are able to give a definitive answer based on their knowledge of "correct Japanese". And as a result of this, learners are satisfied with the teachers as machines rather than teachers as interlocutors.

2.3.3 Practices in Japanese Language Education for Co-construction of Meaning

This section reviews literature and recent practices that attempt to promote co-construction of meaning in the classroom of foreign language education, particularly in Japanese language education. The central question in this section asks how native-speaker teachers can initiate to overcome one-sidedness between teachers and students and to build more reflexive relationships in the classroom. Sato (2014) answered this question: stop teaching and listen intently to what the learners are saying. He also explained that teachers had already gained a certain degree of power in the present educational system where the teachers could choose the contents to teach (i.e., Teaching itself is a manifestation of the existing power relations). If so, one of the solutions against this is to release what the teachers have in hand. This release may include the teachers' decision not to reproduce uncritically what they did in previous teaching activities just because they did it before. It is therefore probable that their decision may contradict what other colleagues adopt in the classroom. It is also likely that the teachers are afraid of releasing what they have in hand right now and risking their "source of power". However, if students can liberate themselves from the fixed relationship, as a consequence of this, the teachers can be liberated as well (Misago, 2019).

And then the teachers and the students can perceive each other as interlocutors and begin co-construction of meaning in communication. This is the problem-posing education (Freire, 2000, p.71), which Freire envisioned as the opposite of banking concept of education. Freire (2000) said, “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students” (p.72).

Stop correcting can be one of the solutions for more reflexive relationships that promote co-construction of meaning in the classroom. This approach may encourage the learners to doubt their perception of teachers as the machines that can judge “correct Japanese” and find good expressions for their writing. This will foster awareness that only students themselves can interact with their ideas and discover their expressions in Japanese in their own way (Thomson, 2010).

Turning now to the practices of ‘"stop teaching and listen intently to what the learners are saying” (Sato, 2014) in Japanese Language Education, I review Global Activities of Mariotti at Ca' Foscari University. Several case studies (Mariotti, 2020a; Ligabue, 2019; Caddeo et al., 2019) have been conducted on the course offered for third-year B.A. students at Ca' Foscari University in 2019. These case studies reported the following features of the course: 1) Each lesson consisted of the activities of dialogues among students over their own theme; 2) The teacher did not stand in front of the students and nor did she adopt the conventional teaching activities, in which teachers provided knowledge including grammar or other linguistic rules. Because of that, there was no textbook or a specific reference book; 3) Reflecting on the dialogues with classmates, the students wrote a report on their own theme. This activity included the continuous process of interacting with their thoughts and classmates; 4) The final marks included the results of peer and self-assessment based on the

criteria that the students chose by themselves; 5) 14 facilitators participated as volunteers. The 14 facilitators, including me, had diverse backgrounds: Some of them were master's degree students, and others had already experience in language education. However, all of them participated in this course voluntarily in the sense that they did not aim to obtain credits. The facilitators mainly joined in group activities with students to stimulate their activities.

The experience of being a facilitator provided me with the first opportunity in this universtiy to interact with the Japanese language learners not for correcting their errors but only for communicating. This was a paradigm shift to me because this experience made me reconsider critically “correct Japanese” and my nativeness that was believed to represent “correct Japanese” (Thomson, 2010). In Mariotti's course, the facilitators were expected to stimulate the students’ activities, but we were not expected to help them because the engagements of helping may result in controlling the activities and making the students dependent on the facilitators. Error correction on students’ speaking and writing was a kind of helping engagement, even though the students asked the facilitators to do so. So, instead of correcting, what I did was asking. When I encountered unclear sentences in their writing, I asked the students for a more detailed explanation before judging them as incorrect: Can you explain this in another way? Can you give me some concrete examples? Throughout the group activities, I noticed that the students often utilized the questions they received to respond to me and other group members. Incorporating the questions, the students usually rewrote with more complex structures and more concrete examples such as more detailed descriptions of events, feeling, and contexts. This was a sustainable cycle of asking questions, responding to them, and developing their thoughts during the group activities. And the more we turned this cycle, the more concreteness, originality, and liveliness the writing gained. It was likely that this cycle of interactions was gradually decreasing the students’ high attention

towards forms and the concept of proficiency level while increasing awareness that they could express what they wanted in Japanese. Throughout the semester I observed that "no matter the level, they engaged in asking others, looking for understanding or helping others understanding what they wanted to say" (Mariotti, 2020a, p.15). By contrast, if I had corrected their sentences or phrases as errors just because of being a native speaker of Japanese, we would not be able to generate this cyclical process in the group activity. It is because that correction might stop the students from attempting to produce the sentences by themselves to communicate. Therefore, the cycle of interactions in this course may be consistent with Krashen's insight (1982) that the error correction may make the learners avoid challenging expressions because of anxiety for making errors.

With respect to the approach of Global Activities of Mariotti, active learning is probably a key concept because, compared to traditional lectures in higher education because the course promoted the learners to engage more actively in their learning process through discussing, thinking, and writing in Japanese. Bonwell and Eison (1991) identify five characteristics of an active learning classroom:

- Students are involved in more than listening.
- Less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills.
- Students are involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
- Students are engaged in activities (e.g., reading,discussing,writing).
- Greater emphasis is placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values. (p.2)

This examination of the active learning classroom is supported by Barr and Tag

(1995) who claim that the concept of active learning is an essential shift in university education from “the Instruction Paradigm” to “the Learning Paradigm” (p.21). According to them, in the Learning Paradigm, “knowledge consists of frameworks or holes that are created or constructed by the learner. Knowledge is not seen as cumulative and linear, like a wall of bricks, but as a nesting and interacting of frameworks” (Barr & Tag, 1995, p.21). Due to this complicating nature of knowledge in the Learning Paradigm, it is likely that active learning dissatisfies students who want a more straightforward way of learning (Alessandrini, 2019). However, the practice of Mariotti implies that learners may be able to acquire unique and diverse expressions only through spending a certain amount of time and effort interacting with others and with their own thoughts. A paradigm shift in language education may be to change language classrooms from the place where learners are corrected to the place where learners can encounter peers to co-construct meaning through the cyclical process of interactions.

2.4 Action Research in Japanese Language Education

The final part of this chapter is concerned with action research, which is the methodological approach taken in this study. As Elliott (1991) states, action research is “to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge. The production and utilization of knowledge are subordinate to, and conditioned by, this fundamental aim” (p.49). The nature of action research, therefore, has promoted teachers to research to solve their own problems in their classroom. Action research can enable the teachers to analyze carefully their practices, and this careful analysis may change dramatically the teachers’ perspective on the educational system that the teachers belong to as well as their educational actions in the classroom (Coonan, 2000). Even though action research is open to practitioners, it does not say that this methodological approach is inferior to theoretical research. It is because action

research also requires both a scientific approach for objects to the problems and strong motivation to find a practical solution for this (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Elliott (2004) also holds the view that teachers' engagement in educational research will increase presence as change-makers while relativizing the power of academic authority.

Action research was introduced in the research of Japanese Language education in the late 1990s following the prevalence of action research of English Education in Japan (Yokomizo, 2011). Miyo et al. (2014) claimed that adoption of action research in Japanese language education followed two traditions of action research in ESL. One is action research that has a fundamental orientation towards solving social problems while challenging conventional values of society, and the other is action research which was accepted as a research method to find solutions in teaching practices. The distinct difference between the two is that the latter lacks critical examinations of the existing social values. However, the latter has been more dominant in Japanese language education (Ichishima, 2014; Miyo et al., 2014) such as a study of Yokomizo (2011) who introduced action research for teachers as a meaningful activity to reflect on their own teaching skills. This approach, which emphasizes the personal and professional development of teachers, may be more attractive to the teachers who need means that may directly contribute to improving their skills as teaching professionals and everyday lessons.

However, the investigation under the latter approach may be limited by existing frameworks of social value. Regarding action research of this approach in foreign language education, the researchers may ignore social contexts behind foreign language education such as the realities in which language education policy is deeply connected with social issues outside the classrooms (Miyo et al., 2014). Returning briefly to the subject of the native speaker as a model in foreign language education, the researchers may seek to find how to

promote this misleading model without asking the fundamental question: Why do the learners should speak and write like a native speaker? Similarly, Ichishima (2014) maintains that action researche that only focuses on teaching methods may lack the essential component of action research (i.e., critical examination of the existing social values). In her claim (2014), action research, which is the process for sharing and reconstructing the vision with learners, should have an orientation for social transformation even on a small scale, and therefore teachers should clearly show their own educational vision in action research. Ichishima's argument is supported by the concept of reflexivity in action research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explained:

> Reflexivity thus implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them. What this represents is a rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society from the particular biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics. (p.16)

To conclude this chapter, I clarify my standpoint as the participant-as-practitioners-and-researchers. This research has aimed to find solutions to my questions in my practice of Japanese language education: Should I continue corrective feedback although the correction may result in making students dependent on teachers?; Should I support the students' goal for error-less writing which may reinforce the concept of "correct Japanese"?; If I should not, how do I want to teach writing in Japanese, instead? From the perspective of foreign language education, writing maybe no more than one element of the four skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, writing is not just a skill but a fundamental way of communication because it helps us interact with our own thoughts and others. On the other

hand, as discussed above, obsession for correctness in writing, which corrective feedback may reinforce, likely makes writers undervalue the process of thinking and communicating with others through writing. Regarding writing as communication, my question can be restated more simply: Why may the students refuse to enjoy deepening their thoughts, finding their own words for the thoughts, and communicating with me and other classmates through the process of writing in Japanese? To answer these questions, I planned the course that aimed to construct a more reflexive relationship where the students' actions and thoughts affect each other in the classroom, following the tradition of critical and transformative pedagogy. In this course, I also attempted to transform my role in the classroom from a native-speaker teacher who recognizes errors and corrects them to an interlocutor.

3.Methodology

3.1. Introduction

I planned and taught Japanese lessons (the writing course) offered in the First semester of 2020 (September to December 2020, 14 lessons) for master's degree students of the Department of Asian and North African Studies (Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea) at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. This study aims to address the following research questions: Does a writing course without corrective feedback contribute to transforming the fixed relationship between native-speaker teachers and students? And two sub-research questions are: 1) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the student to actively engage in their learning and writing?; 2) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese?

3.2 Ethics Statement

All the information and data of the students in this thesis were provided by the

students who gave consent for using their data. At the beginning of the course I explained the purpose of the research and asked the students to submit the document, Model 1 INFORMATION ON DATA PROCESSING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT: teaching Writing: not correcting but communicating. Japanese as a Case Study. In accordance with art.13 of EU Regulation 2016/679 (MODELLO 1 INFORMATIVA SUL TRATTAMENTO DEI DATI NELL'AMBITO DEL PROGETTO Didattica della scrittura: comunicare, non correggere. Il giapponese come caso di studio. ai sensi dell'art.13 del Regolamento UE 2016/679). 67 participants (LICAAM 40, LEISAAM27) students submitted the document. I also explained that the students could disconsent to this. All the names of the students in this thesis are anonymous.

3.3 Background of the Writing Course

Department of Asian and North African Studies (Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea) offered two different master's degree programmes concentrating on Japanese Studies and Japanese language: 1) Master's Degree Programme of Language and Civilisation of Asia and Mediterranean Africa of (Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Lingue e civiltà dell'Asia e dell'Africa Mediterranean: LICAAM); 2) Master's Degree Programme of Languages, Economics and Institutions of Asia and North Africa(Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Lingue, economie e istituzioni dell'Asia e dell'Africa Mediterranean: LEISAAM). 1) LICAAM students tended to have academic interests in humanities while 2) LEISAAM students were more interested in social sciences. Both programs required the first-year master's students to take 24 ECT credits of the Japanese language, which consisted of two modules: Japanese Language 1 Module1 (12ECT) offered in the first semester (from September to December) and Japanese Language Module 2 (12 ECT) offered in the second semester (from February to May).

Table 2

Syllabus of Japanese language 1 MOD.1 (First Semester of A.Y. 2020/21)

	Main Unit	Language exercise Unit A	Language exercise Unit B	Language exercise Unit C	Language exercise Unit D
Who teaches?	Professor	CEL A	CEL B	CEL NISHIDA	CEL C
Contents	Discussion and translations of texts on multilingualism and multiculturalism in Japan.	Exercises with textbooks and other materials, text comprehension tutorials.	Listening exercises, oral production, and interaction. Reading and discussing texts.	Text comprehension exercises.	Conversation exercises.
Exam	Written exam	Written exam and oral exam	Written exam and oral exam	Report and oral exam	Not conducted

NOTE. The author made the table from https://www.unive.it/data/course/333125/programma

Each module consisted of five different units (Table 2). The main unit was taught by a professor, and the other four units were situated as Japanese language exercises (Esercitazione di lingua giapponese) for practical Japanese with Language Assistants (CEL). This structure of language course reflected the idea that a "Language Assistant was considered to be a kind of subordinate character" (Cibin, 2012, p.48). And the exam of the module consisted of four units in accordance with the module structure (Table 2). The students needed to gain at least 18 of 30 points (60%) for all four units to obtain 12 ECT of Japanese Language 1 Module1. I, as Language Assistant, taught one unit of Language Exercise that composed the entire module. And this research examines the unit I taught.

However, throughout this thesis, I use the term “writing Course” for the unit that I taught and the term “teacher” to describe my role in this writing Course.

3.4 The Writing Course

3.4.1 Objective of the Course

I planned and conducted the writing course in which the teacher did not offer corrective feedback on students’ writing (e.g., reports, drafts, and comments on the online platform Moodle). The objective of the courses were: 1) to transform the fixed relationship where native-speaker teachers should correct and students should be corrected; 2) to promote the student to actively engage in their learning and writing; 3)to promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese.

3.4.2 Classes

As already mentioned, this course was offered as one of the units that composed Japanese language 1 MOD.1 (ECTS 12 credits) for the master’s degree students who majored in Japanese Studies in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The writing course was offered during the first semester, from 10 September to 10 December of 2020. A 90-minutes lesson was offered once a week for a total of 14 weeks.

The course was divided into two classes: Class 1 was for the students in Master's Degree Programme of Language and Civilisation of Asia and Mediterranean Africa (Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Lingue e civiltà dell'Asia e dell'Africa Mediterranean: LICAAM); Class 2 was for the students in Master's Degree Programme of Languages, Economics and Institutions of Asia and North Africa (Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Lingue, economie e istituzioni dell'Asia e dell'Africa Mediterranean: LEISAAM). I conducted lessons for LICAAM class and for LEIG class following the same design.

3.4.3 Participants

All the participants of the course enrolled in the master's degree program, so most of them had already studied Japanese for at least three years.

1) Class 1 (Master's Degree Programme of Language and Civilisation of Asia and Mediterranean Africa: LICAAM). The number of the students attending lessons on average was from 55 to 75, and approximately half of them participated in the lessons via Zoom (Table 3).
2) Class 2 (Master's Degree Programme of Languages, Economics, and Institutions of Asia and North Africa: LEISAAM). The number of the students attending lessons was from 40 to 45, and also in Class 2 half of the participants took the lessons remotely. Compared to Class 1, the total number of the participants was small mainly because LEISAAM limited the enrollment of students while LICAAM did not (Table 3).

Because the course was offered during the COVID-19 pandemic, the students had two options for participating in the lessons: 1) They could came to the physical classroom; 2) They could attend the lessons via an online conference platform, ZOOM. The teacher conducted lessons in the classroom, and the lessons were contemporaneously streamed online via ZOOM but not recorded. Ca' Foscari University of Venice named this teaching method dual teaching, and the next chapter examined how this modality influenced the course activities.

Registration of Moodle in Table3 means the number of the students who registered on the online platform Moodle in which the teacher uploaded all the materials for the writing course. During the course, the participants were also required to upload their drafts or participate in online activities. A gap existed between the number of those attending lessons and those who registered on Moodle because some students registered on Moodle only to

access the course materials, even though they did not attend lessons.

Table 3

Participants of the course

	Class1	Class 2
a) Program	LICAAM	LEISAAM
b) Participants of Lessons (Average)	Total 55-75 Classroom 25-40 Zoom 25-35	Total 40-45 Classroom 20-25 Zoom 20-25
c) Registration of Moodle (24/11/2020)	141	83
d) Number of groups	13 (76 students)	8 (45 students)

The number of attendance was fluid mainly because attendance was not a prerequisite for exams: the students could obtain credits as long as they achieved a passing score. Each course may have an exam policy, which is usually written in the syllabus (e.g., some professors require that the students who do not attend the lessons should submit additional assignments for the exam). Japanese language courses in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University did not have a mandatory attendance policy for language lessons offered in the first semester of 2020.

3.4.4 Course Design

The writing course, which was designed based on the practices of Mariotti at Ca' Foscari University (2.3.3), had three characteristics listed below.

1) Writing a report on a theme of their own choice. The students wrote one report of 3,000 characters throughout the semester. At the beginning of the course, the teacher provided a general theme to write: “seeking for your research theme”. The students were

required to write about their academic interest or their process to discover their academic themes, but they should specify how and what they were going to write about by themselves. Three midterm due dates existed before the final deadline (Table 4), so the students could develop and revise their writing according to these midterm dues.

Table 4

Deadlines of the drafts and the final report

Deadline	Date	Characters	Contents
First deadline	22 September	250	Draft ● Introduction
Second deadline	6 October	280-1,000	Draft ● Introduction ● Arguments
Final deadline	28 October	3,000	Final Version ● Introduction ● Arguments ● Conclusion ● Reference

2)Interactions in small groups inside and outside the classroom. The students developed their writing through interacting with class members in group activities. From week three the course began the group activities, and the students exchanged their ideas and thoughts on their writing drafts in the fixed group until the end of the course. Groups consisted of 4 to 9 students. These group activities were carried out both in the classroom and outside the classroom. For activities outside the classroom, I created a group channle on an online platform, Moodle (Figure 1). Forum is one of the functions of Moodle in which the students can post comments and make a thread on a topic. Until they completed the report the students repeated the cycle: 1) the students uploaded their drafts on the group forum; 2) the

group members read and provided comments on the drafts; 3) the students who received the comments responded to them and revised their drafts. During class time, the students discussed their drafts uploaded on Moodle, so the students were expected to read all the drafts of group members before each lesson.

Figure 1

Picture of posts on the group channle on Moodle

3) Reading together the reference book in the classroom. In the curriculum of Japanese Language 1 Module1, my unit was originally assigned to improve reading comprehension proficiency. So I decided to spend a certain amount of time reading texts in Japanese besides group activities. However, this course did not use a textbook of Japanese language (e.g., grammar, reading comprehension, and writing) unlike other exercise units, but used “Design your thesis. From finding your theme to building your research” (Hosokawa, 2008) as a reference book. The book was not written only for Japanese learners but for university students in Japan to explain how to write academic papers. This book was not a

type of how-to guide for good writing, but it raised thought-provoking questions that the students should reflect on during the writing process. It covers broad topics: subjectivity and objectivity in research, stereotypes, “correct Japanese”, and writing as a process for thinking. I emphasized that we would use this book for whole-class discussion, but we would not use class time to translate this book into Japanese. So the students were strongly recommended to read the book before each lesson and to bring their opinion into the classroom.

Usually, every lesson consisted of three parts (Table 5). First, we spent about half of lesson time reading the book and deepening the topics. This was usually a whole-class discussion. After that, the students engaged in the group activities as mentioned, and they could interact with each other in a smaller group setting than the whole-class discussion. Lastly, the teacher and the students reflected on the lesson together.

Table 5

Typical Class schedule

Class activities	Time allocated
Whole class: Reading the reference book and discussion on the topics	45%
Groups: Group activities on their reports	50%
Whole class: Reflection on the lesson	5%

3.4.5 Assessment

The final evaluation of the course consisted of two parts: 1) marks on the final report (20%) and 2) marks on the oral exams (80%). 1) The evaluation of the final report included the peer assessment and self-assessment of the final report (one-six of the total marks on the final report). The students discussed and decided their own criteria for peer and self-

assessment in each group, and they conducted the assessment according to their criteria one week before the final lesson. The later chapter showed the detailed process of choosing the criteria. 2) In the oral exam, which was an open-book exam, I basically asked two types of content-based questions: One is to ask their opinions about the topics in the reference book we discussed during the lessons (e.g., How do you think about the concept of "correct Japanese" that the author mentioned in the book?). Another was to ask for further explanation about the report the students submitted (e.g., How did you use your own experience for this report?). During the lessons, the students had been announced what kind of questions they would be asked in this exam. So the exam was more like a discussion between the teacher and the students than assessing specific skills or knowledge.

3.4.6 Teacher's Policy

Because I had assumed that my policy of not-correction of students' writing might conflict with the students' beliefs, I decided to share the objective of this course and the reasons behind my decision in the first lesson of the course:

1) This course attempts to encourage the participants to reflect on what they want to tell by using their own words in Japanese, besides minimizing too much focus on grammatical correctness.
2) For this reason, I will not provide error corrections on their drafts throughout the semester. If the students need any support for writing, they are always welcomed to visit during my office hours.

Moreover, when I requested permission to collect data for the research, I also showed the students the title of this thesis, "Teaching Writing: not correcting but communicating. Japanese as a Case Study", which is the essence of my argument. As I explicitly explained in the first lesson, I did not provide any corrective feedback on the students' drafts and posts on

Moodle, although I constantly read almost all of them. I sometimes commented on students' writing, but the comments were always my reactions to students' writing or requests for further explanation on expressions and phrases that I could not understand very well.

3.5 Research Method

The thesis attempts to describe the process in which the teacher refused to be a model of "correct Japanese" and the students discovered their own expressions. Ichishima (2014) mentioned that action eesearch in Japanese Language Education tends to value successful cases that anyone can reproduce, but her action research, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of showing the reality of her classroom in which conflicts of values often occurred between the teacher and the students or among the students (Ichishima, 2014). My thesis also will not intend to provide a successful case, but I also attempt to show the value conflicts arose in the classroom when the teacher showed her value of language teaching — not correcting—, which might not satisfy students' requirements for native-speaker teachers.

The analysis of this research adopted Ichishima's method (1994) which she used for her action research in the Japanese language courses that she conducted as the teacher. In her research the data were divided into three categories: 1) teacher's perspective, 2) students' perspective, 3) intersubjective perspectives of the teacher and students. She insisted that these three perspectives should compose action research to examine reflexive relationships between the practices based on the teacher's philosophy of education and students' reactions to the practice in the classroom (Ichishima, 1994). Following Ichishima's categorization, I collected and categorized the data.

3.5.1 Teacher's perspective

Observation reports of the author. I wrote the observation reports after each lesson

of LICAAM and LEIG. The contents of the reports included the goals, the activities and the results of each lesson, reactions from the students, discourses in the classroom, and overall impressions which I received during the lessons. I utilized the data in the reports to reflect on my observations regarding the events in the classroom, focusing on the reactions of the students to each activity in the classroom and how I was influenced by them.

3.5.2 Students' perspective

3.5.2.1 Observation reports of three students. One LICAAM student (Nicole) and two LEIG students (Camilla, Sara) filled the same format of the observation report from the perspective of the students to the course. As indicated in Table 6, Nicole physically came to the classroom while Camilla and Sara participated in the lessons using ZOOM. All three students majored in Japanese language and participated in a course of Japanese Language Education (Glottodidattica, Professor Marcella Maria Mariotti) for master's degree students of the Department of Asian and Mediterranean Africa. This course emphasized the practical implications of Japanese language education. The course was conducted in workshop style, and the students were required to write the observation reports on Japanese language lessons that they participated in as students and to share their observations during the workshop. I asked the three students (Nicole, Camilla, and Sara) for permission to use their observation reports for this thesis because their observation reports would offer the student's perspective of my lessons.

At the same time, because I also participated in every lesson of this Japanese Language Education course as one of the participants, and I shared my observation reports as a teacher with other participants including these three students, I and the three students might have influenced each other through this Japanese education course. I shared my philosophy of education behind the practice, and the three students gave me suggestions or opinions in

every workshop. Although these three students did not have specific roles in my course such as facilitators, they had more opportunities to know and digest what was behind each activity compared to other students in my course.

Table 6

The authors of observation reports

	Class 1: LICAAM	Class 2: LEISAAM
Observation reports (Teacher's perspective)	Nishida	Nishida
Observation reports (Student's perspective)	Nicole (classroom)	Sara (ZOOM) Camilla (ZOOM)

3.5.2.2 Students writing. All the written product of the students were uploaded on the online platform, Moodle. The students' writing includes 1) drafts and revisions of their reports; 2) the posts in the group forums of Moodle that the students exchanged with each other to feedback on their drafts (These posts were used to investigate how the students developed their writing while interacting with group members online); 3) feedback comments for the peer and self-assessment that the students made for assessing their own final reports and those of the group members (These comments were used to see how their awareness had been transformed or not from correctness to other values by the end of the course).

3.5.3 Intersubjective Perspectives of the Teacher and Students

3.5.3.1 Discourses in the classroom. I used written record of discourses in the classroom. Particularly during the whole-class discussion on the conduction of the peer and self-evaluation (see 5.4.4), many students expressed their own ideas toward this.

3.5.3.2 Private communication between the teacher and the students. This

includes emails to the teacher and discussion during office hours, which were recorded with consent. Because the number of participants in the courses was large, I could not have adequate time to talk with each student. These private conversations were valuable to examine more private interactions between I and the students.

4. Impact of the COVID-19 on the Writing Course

This chapter clarifies the influence of online education on the course offered from September to December 2020 during the Covid crisis. Before starting with the analysis of the writing course, I would like to describe in detail the situation of the course. After the outbreak of the COVID-19, educational institutions all over the world shifted to online education as an urgent response to the pandemic that the world had experienced for the first time. Although many teaching staffs in the world had not been prepared for online teaching (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond, 2020; Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia & Koole, 2020), we did not have any option but to incorporate unfamiliar technologies into our teaching activities to continue with educational activities and to protect the right of education under the situation where we needed to avoid close contact with others (UNESCO, 2020). At the beginning of the semester Ca' Foscari University decided to adopt dual teaching "for all students who find themselves unable to access the university due to logistical, health or economic difficulties" (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, n.d.). In this teaching method, teachers delivered lessons in the classroom while the controlled number of the students were allowed to attend classrooms, and other students followed the live streaming lessons using a video conference platform, ZOOM.

The writing course continued to deliver lessons in dual teaching until the end of the course, and due to this teaching modality, approximately 50% of the students of the course chose to follow the lessons using ZOOM as already explained in the previous chapter. At the

beginning of the semester, it was almost impossible for me to estimate how great the effect of dual teaching would be on students' learning, and I assume that so did the students. The students and I in this course were not necessarily inflexible with new technology, but we were not prepared for this sudden change of teaching style. In fact, I always encountered small troubles in the facilities of the classroom and students' computer devices (e.g., internet connections, presentation mode, audio setting). We often lost a small amount of time to solve the troubles, and this kind of interruption often distracted both the online students and students in the classroom from whole-class discussion.

One of the negative impacts of the dual-modality on this course was a psychological separation between the students in the classroom and online, and this separation avoided promoting a sense of unity among the participants. I observed that many students in the classroom had passionate attitudes toward the class activities; however, this positive flow felt with the classroom probably could not transcend the boundary between the classroom and virtual classroom on ZOOM. The facilities of the university and technical assistance were not sufficient enough to deliver lessons in a compatible way for the dual teaching, although the university promised that "equipment in the classrooms shall enable the best conditions both for attending lessons in person or remotely and for teaching" (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, n.d.). For example, the audio facilities were not as good as we had expected: The microphones could not perfectly pick up the voices of students in the classroom. This defect might not severely affect lecture-type lessons, but this was the fundamental problem in an active learning classroom, such as my course, which emphasized the importance of the interactions among the participants. In fact, every time someone spoke up in the classroom for a whole-class discussion, I needed to repeat it in front of my microphone for the students online. Obviously, this was not a perfect solution, but I did not want to switch my course to a

lecture-style because of the malfunctioning of these facilities. Generally, both the students and I had a sense of dissatisfaction with the lessons throughout the semester, particularly the students who participated remotely in the lessons might have been struggling to control their motivation for learning in this environment. Taken together, online education without comprehensive technological support might result in distancing online students from actively participating in lesson activities.

On the other hand, it is possible to see education in this disruption as an opportunity to reflect on learner's responsibility for their own learning. It is true that online education allows students to have more flexibility in learning, but teachers and students may need to consider the consequence of this flexibility. What I observed in my course was that some students seemingly ended up in regarding the dual teaching policy as a convenient tool for attending the lessons. They seemed to choose if they came to the classroom or attended the lesson online according to their mood, physical conditions, weather, and other personal reasons. In the writing course, the groups for the class activities were originally divided based on whether students came to the classroom or attended via ZOOM, but it sometimes did not work well under this circumstance. I shared this problem with the students as a discussion topic during one lesson, but this did not contribute to improving the situation. Active learning classrooms may usually be designed to realize the concept: “learning environments and activities are learner-centered and learner-controlled” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p.21). However, this concept will not be realized if the learners do not appreciate being in the center of learning, and this might be a “vulnerable” aspect of active learning.

Breakout room, which is a function that allowed participants to enter an independent room online, also raised a question about learners’ responsibility concerning the virtual classroom. For group discussion, the students in the classroom had face-to-face dialogues,

which were exactly the same before the COVID-19 crisis, except for the masks of the students and social distance between them. On the other hand, the online students used breakout rooms as an alternative to the classroom environment for small group discussion; however, this function did not allow me to see contemporaneously all the group activities online, so I needed to enter each room one by one to see their group activities. The typical issue relating to this was the choice of language during the discussion: Italian or Japanese. It was often observed that the students in the online rooms used Italian during the group activities probably because they were not watched by the teacher. I often encountered the students speaking in Italian when I suddenly entered their breakout rooms. When the students noticed my presence in the room, they looked uncomfortable as if they had done something to be blamed by me and switched quickly from Italian to Japanese. In contrast, most students in the classroom mainly used Japanese. In a few cases that I heard Italian during group activities in the classroom, I let them speak Italian or took a specific action (e.g., join them and ask the reasons for not using Japanese for the activities). Actually, I did not explicitly tell them not to use Italian in this course (otherwise, the teacher's role would become that of a guardian, who must carefully observe all the group activities and intervene in the students' activities if they were found using Italian). Even though the teacher did not show a strict attitude toward speaking Italian, the students in the classroom spontaneously decided to speak Japanese. The implication is that the teacher's presence affected students' behavior both consciously and unconsciously if we shareed time and place. The teacher could receive both visible and invisible information from the participants, and the same might be true for students. However, this reflexivity might not occur between the teacher and students online; and therefore, online learning required more commitment of the students for their own learning.

Another issue about learners' responsibility relating to ZOOM was "the Camera-On/ Camera-Off Dilemma" (Terada, 2021). Because teachers often rely on students' non-verbal information for lessons, students' decision of turning off the camera became a new controversy in education (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021; Terada, 2021). Also in my course, some participants via ZOOM did not turn on the video camera, even if I explained that interactions were the most important elements of the course and I needed to know the reactions of the students online as well as those in the classroom. In fact, it was reported that university students had complex reasons for not turning on their cameras during online lessons (Castelli &Sarvary, 2021). It was impossible for me to know the reasons behind each one of the students in this relatively large course; however, to my knowledge, the students in my course hesitated to turn on the video camera for the following reasons: they did not want to show their room and their face on the video; they did not want to be asked questions; they wanted to save the cost of the internet; they were struggling for their anxiety for this pandemic and listening to the lessons passively was all they could manage to do. As Castelli and Sarvary (2021, p.7) proposed, I "encouraged" the students to turn on the video camera of Zoom, explaining that facial expressions would promote interactions in this course. Responding to this, roughly 70~80% of students online kept their video camera on during the lessons, although this percentage changed depending on the day.

Together, I had two contradicting thoughts throughout the semester in the COVID-19 crisis. In the course, "the co-producers of learning, can and must, of course, take responsibility for their own learning" (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p.15); however, I was not fully convinced that all the students could be the co-producers of learning in any situation such as the disrupt we had experienced. I needed to ask to turn on the camera and the reasons behind this every time at the beginning of the lesson; otherwise, many students chose to turn off the

video camera by default. This was actually a struggle for me, but this thesis observed this struggle as one of the value conflicts between me and the students in the process that the students become aware of the responsibility for their own learning and for others in the classroom.

5.Study

5.1 Introduction

To examine the writing course, this Chapter divides the course chronologically into three phases as follows: 1) the initial phase where the students encountered the course concept (from week one to week two); 2) the middle phase where the students formed the groups and developed their report through interactions with group members (from week three to week thirteen); 3) the final phase where the students began the preparation for peer and self-assessment on the final version of the report and conducted the assessment (from week eleven to week fourteen). Section of 1) the initial phase mainly investigates the process of confusion that the students undertook after they realized that the course required them to choose a theme and write a relatively long report on the theme in Japanese. Class 1 (LICAAM) and Class 2 (LEISAAM) will be investigated because the students in both classes reacted in an almost similar way to my introduction of the course concept. The examination of the initial phase uses the observation reports written by the participants of Class 1 (Nicole) and Class 2 (Sara and Camilla) as well as students' writing already explained in the previous chapter (3.5). On the other hand, the analysis of 2) the middle phase and 3) the final phase focuses only on Class 1 (LICAAM). The two sections aim to study how the students constructed the reflexive relationship through the group activities that began from the middle phase of the course and how this relationship affected their writing activities. For this purpose, I chose to compare the activities of each group inside the same class (in this case

Class 1). The reason I chose Class 1 but not Class 2 is that Class 1 had more participants (almost double of Class 2) and, probably because of this, Class 1 showed more diversity in their activities. There were some groups that showed more active engagement in the group activities while others demonstrate less passion in interactions with the group members. Because the thesis will discuss why this gap might exist, I chose Class 1 for further investigation.

5.2 Confusion at the Initial Phase

5.2.1 Overview of the Initial Phase

This section examines the initial phase of the writing course focusing on the confusion as a symbolic phenomenon of the course. Confusion is generally defined as "a situation in which people do not understand what is happening, what they should do or who someone or something is" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). I chose the term "confusion" as the keyword to describe the students' initial reactions to the course because the three participants (Camilla, Sara, and Nicole) often used "confusione" in their observation reports to describe their own and other participants' status of mind. The purpose of this section is to consider the causes of the confusion towards the course as well as highlighting the functions of the confusion in the writing course.

5.2.1.1 A Freedom of Choice. There might be several reasons for the confusion in the initial phase of the course, but probably the students needed time to digest some aspects of the course. The first two or three lessons were the places where the value of the teacher and the value of the students encountered for the first time. In the first lesson, I explained the syllabus, the objectives of the course, and the vision behind them. While listening to me, the students might judge if they wanted to accept my approach based on their previous experience (Dörnyei, 2005). As explained in the previous chapter (3.4.6), I assumed that my

decision not to correct the errors would cause negative reactions from the students. Besides, the course required more engagement in their own learning than passively sitting in the classroom. The curriculum of the course was not so fixed because the contents of the course relied much on the students' commitment, and this nature of course might be different from other units of Japanese language exercises. So it was probable that the students had a sense of confusion including rejections, negative reactions, and skepticism toward the course concepts. However, the students rarely shared their doubts or opinions in the classroom, especially in the first phases. On the other hand, the observation reports of the three participants, the students' comments of self-assessment at the end of the course, and private communications (e.g, emails from the students) surfaced students' confusion in the initial phase. It was observed that the students were confused because they could not see how they could carry out the course activities. Particularly, they were seemingly less confident about two aspects of the report: 1) By the end of the course they needed to write a relatively long report in Japanese (3,000 characters), which many of the participants may not have been asked to write before; 2) They needed to choose their theme on their own. As regards the length, the observation report of Camilla described how an overwhelmed classmate, who might lack previous experience, shared her reaction with Camilla:

> Alla lezione di lingua giapponese modulo 1 c'è stato poi un intervento molto interessante da parte di F. , che ha spiegato di saper molto bene su cosa voler scrivere per poi dichiarare: non saprei spiegarlo in giapponese. *In the Japanese language lesson module 1 there was then a very interesting comment by F., who explained that she knew very well what she wants to write, and she said " I don't know how to explain it in Japanese*. (Observation report, Camilla: Class 2, 18/09/2020)

As the comments of self-assessment on the final version of the reports, some students also

referred to the length of the report as the most challenging element in this course:

1. 私が興味のあるテーマについて日本語で3000字以上のレポートを書くなんて素晴らしい経験でした。1回目の授業のとき「無理！絶対できない」と思いました。*It was a great experience to write a report of more than 3000 words in Japanese on a topic of my interest. I said to myself "Impossible! I can't do it!" in the first class*. (Personal communication: Email, Francesco: Class 1, 3/12/2020)
2. 実は、「皆さんはテーマを選んで、レポートを書いてください」と言われたとき、少しパニックになって、「どうしたらいいのだろう」と思いました。イタリア語でも、文章を書くことは嫌いで、あまり上手ではないからです。日本語で3000字のレポートを書くことは無理だと思いました。*As a matter of fact, when I was told, "Choose a topic and write a report", I was in a little panic, and I was worried about what I should do. This is because I don't like to write, even in Italian, and I'm not very good at it. I thought it would be impossible to write a 3,000 character report in Japanese!* (Comment on Self-assessment, Alessia: Class 2, 2/12/2020)

It was understandable that some students felt pressure for writing a long report in Japanese. By contrast, it was unexpectable for me to see student's hesitation to select a theme on their own. Although the report should be written in Japanese, the students could choose any topic as long as it was about their own academic interest or the process to discover their academic questions. To find their own expressions, they first need to know what they want to tell others (Mariotti, 2016). Therefore, the freedom of choice was a fundamental element of the course that attempted to promote the learners to express what they wanted to tell in their own words, and the selection of a theme was the first step that the students started with. This option was supposed to be an opportunity for the students to have full ownership of their

writing from the beginning and to increase their motivation for writing. However, I had misunderstood the student expectation because freedom of choice did not please all the students, but instead, it could increase some student's tension toward writing. The observation report of the student (Camilla: Class 2) confirmed this:

> La confusione generale dello students. . . Ci sono vari tipi di risposta: c'è lo studente che reagisce con una sorta di blackout, con un senso di smarrimento una volta che non vede un filo guida da seguire ma che capisce di dover procedere da solo, fin dalla scelta di cosa dover parlare. *The students' general confusions...There are various types of response: There is the student who reacts with a sort of blackout, with a sense of bewilderment after he cannot see a guiding thread to follow but understands that he must proceed alone from the choice of what to talk about*. (Observation report, Camilla: Class 2, 18/09/2020).

By contrast, my observation report shows my frustration for unexpectedly finding the student's anxiety for choosing a theme:

> Several students asked me directly by email, at office hours, and after the class: the questions were like "I chose XX as my theme. What do you think? Is it OK for you?" These questions reveal that they believe that the teacher knows a right or wrong theme to write for them. The students may also expect that the teacher can give them a sense of guarantee, which I could not. (Observation report, Nishida, 01/10/2020)

The students' perceptions of the free choice probably contradicted the teacher's expectation, and this contradiction perplexed me. It was disappointing for me because I had attempted to explain in the first lesson the success of writing would mainly depend on the process of writing and revising. As the description of my observation report showed, the students' questions made me feel that they asked me the shortest way to reach the answer without

considering what they wanted to write while they hesitated to take responsibility for their choice and outcome of their writing. On the other hand, as Camilla's observation report pointed out, some students might feel even helpless when they realized they had to choose a theme by themselves. It is partly understandable that the freshmen, who had just started their master's degree program, could have difficulties identifying academic interest to write, but the panic or blackout might be an excessive reaction. Throughout the semester the students showed the tendency to prefer teacher's instructions that had no ambiguity nor a margin for their own choice. This tendency was probably consistent with the student's preference toward lecture-type lessons of Japanese language lessons in which teachers chose the contents of teaching and instructed mainly grammatical rules or answers while the students passively listened to the lecture (Alessandrini, 2019).

5.2.1.2 Teacher as an Interlocutor. The teacher's approach to the students also confused the students in the initial phases of the course. The students were required to submit the first drafts that included the reasons for choosing their theme on Moodle by the first deadline (250 characters, 22 September). Because this could be the first and good opportunity to share my belief in writing with the students, I decided to give some comments. The first submissions of many students successfully expressed their process of careful consideration to find the relationship between their own and a theme, although they expressed confusion and a lack of confidence in finding their own theme. My observation report said that "Because it took too much time, I should not have tried this. However, I could not help responding to them, so I made some comments on all assignments submitted (LICAAM:77, LEIG:37, total 114 students) (Observation report, Nishida, 24/09/2020). This indicates my satisfaction for reading and responding to the students' interests and passion in their writing.

My comments usually included two or three questions to help the students reflect on

the contents, focusing only on the contents instead of spotting and correcting the grammatical errors. The feedback comments seemingly stimulated some students, but I received two different reactions to my comments. One was confusion; some students came to me after class or during my office hour to tell me that my online feedback, which focused on the contents, had made them feel pressured and anxious for their choice of theme and writing. This is an example of interactions on Moodle (draft of 200 characters and my comments) between one of the anxious students and I:

> 1. 何の小説や詩を読んでいる間、各自が作者の体験には共感ができます。作者の感情や考慮していたのは分かるようになります。自分と作者の間には密接な関係を生み出します。作者の考えも密接に感じられます。その上で、読者が日常生活では異な文化や考え方が持っている人に直面するなら、聞きやすくなるし、寛容な人になれます。*While reading a novel or poem, we can sympathize with the author's experience. We will understand the author's feelings and thoughts, and we can build a close relationship between you and the author. We can feel the author's thoughts very closely. And then when we, the readers, face someone with a different culture or with a different way of thinking in everyday life, we can listen to them, and we can be a tolerant person.* (Draft for the first deadline, Nicole, 22/09/2020)
>
> 2. ニコールさんは、どの作品と一番密接な関係になったと思いますか？具体的に教えてくれたらうれしいです。*Which work of novel or poem do you have this closest relationship with? I would be happy if you could tell me specifically*.
>
> (Comment on the draft of Nicole, Nishida, 23/09/2020)

Nicole came to me after the lesson and told me that my feedback comments made her feel nervous because she considered that I denied her writing for being too abstract and not

too focused (Observation report, Nishida, 24/09/2020). I did not intend to criticize her writing, but I was curious to know which books or writers had affected her thoughts; however, content-based comments decreased her confidence in writing. A probable explanation for her reaction is that students see native-speaker teachers as a kind of grammar checker as examined earlier (see 2.2.2), and she was therefore confused when the native-speaker teacher demonstrated curiosity to her writing as an interlocutor. Previous research reported that ESL students did not appreciate if language teachers gave them only content-based feedback without error correction (Leki, 1991). Nicole's case did not totally refuse the content-based feedback from the teacher, but her case also corroborates that students have negative reactions (e.g., confusion and tension) to my comments or questions about the contents of the writing.

In contrast, I observed that my comments caused positive reactions from some other students. Five students privately emailed me to answer my feedback comments, even though I did not assign them to answer my questions as homework; these responses were totally spontaneous. One student wrote in her email, “I was grateful that you asked me questions on my writing”. This positive reaction might be caused because the students did not have a language teacher who showed her personal interests in their writing. Taken together, the students' reactions were contradictory: My comments confused some students, although the comments also increased the positive attitude of some students toward writing. The students' reactions, including both negative and positive ones, presented in this section suggest some students in the course might lack previous experience with teachers who showed interest and asked questions on the contents of their writing as a reader. This may cause a mismatch between my attitude toward students' writing and students' expectation for me, and this likely resulted in the confusion observed in some students.

5.2.2 Should Teachers Reduce Confusion in the Classroom?

As described on the previous pages, the three aspects that confused the students in the initial phase were: 1) the length of the report; 2) students' choice of writing; 3) the teacher's comments on the contents. The central question in the initial phase is how teachers can perceive and evaluate the confusion in the classroom of a language course. The confusion observed in the course could be attributed to the students' lack of explicit instructions from the teacher on how the students should continue to write, although they did not have enough experience. However, due to the disorientation at the beginning of the course, the entire semester became their long process to seek solutions to complete their task. Pekrun (2014) suggests the function of confusion in education: "some amount of confusion about cognitive problems can facilitate conceptual change and the development of more advanced knowledge structures within students" (p.25). In fact, the students encountered confusion and attempted to overcome them again and again: this was a problem-solving cycle repeated throughout the course. In observation reports, both Nicole and Sara mentioned that the cycle, which began with confusion, promoted them to develop themselves:

> 1. È proprio vero che se l'introduzione di un nuovo elemento inaspettato causa caos e in parte anche panico, col tempo queste emozioni si trasformano in un'importante esperienza di crescita. *It is really true that if the introduction of a new unexpected element causes chaos and in part even panic, over time these emotions turn into an important experience of growth....* (Observation report, Nicole: Class 1, 26/11/2020)
>
> 2. Questo riflette anche il modo mio personale di reagire a nuovi stimoli. Un po' di panico iniziale, una fase in cui mi faccio tante domande e una fase in cui le risposte aiutano ad accettare la situazione e raggiungere un nuovo equilibrio. Non ne sono

> sicura, ma ho pensato che senza che ce ne accorgessimo, questo corso abbia allenato le nostre capacità di adattamento a qualcosa di nuovo e sconosciuto, e che quindi, almeno in generale, alla fine ci siamo abituati un po' agli imprevisti, quindi penso che questa sia una cosa molto positive. *This also reflects my personal way of reacting to new stimuli. A little initial panic, a phase in which I ask myself many questions, and a phase in which the answers help to accept the situation and reach a new balance. I'm not sure, but I thought that without realizing it, this course has trained our ability to adapt to something new and unknown, and therefore, at least in general, in the end, we got used to the unexpected a bit, so I think this is a very good thing.* (Observation report, Sara: Class 2, 19/11/2020）

The analysis of Sara and Nicole indicate that the confusions probably encouraged the students to start reflecting on what they wanted to do by themselves, to move beyond their comfort zone, and to accept responsibility for their own learning process and outcome. At the final stage of the course, some other students reached the awareness of their own responsibility for learning over the confusion. This awareness was observed in the self-assessment comments that the students made on their report after they had finished all the process of writing. The four comments below surface that without the struggles in the initial phases, the students could not have achieved self-satisfaction at the final phase of the course:

1. 生れて初めて日本語でこんな長いレポートを書きました。この活動のおかげで私の日本語力の長所と短所を最も分かることができたと思います。*For the first time in my life, I wrote such a long report in Japanese. Thanks to this activity, I think I was able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of my Japanese the most!* (Comment on Self-assessment, Claudio: Class 1, 8/12/2020)

2. このレポートを書くために、一生懸命頑張りました。自分で日本語で３０００字レポートを書きました。まだ信じられません！私にとって選んだテーマは本当に大切なので、このようなレポートを書いたことはとてもうれしいです。いい経験だったと思います。大変なのに、色々なことを習いました。最初に自信があまりありませんでしたが、今は自信を持っています。*I made a great effort to write this report. I have done a 3000 character report in Japanese by myself. I still can't believe it! The topic I chose is really important to me, so I am very happy to have written such a report. It was a good experience. It was hard work, but I learned a lot. I was not very confident at first, but now I am.* (Comment on Self-assessment, Veronica: Class 2, 8/12/2020).
3. こういうタスクに挑戦することを通して成長した気がします、本当に。私と同じような意見のある学生さんが少なくないと思います！！*I believe that I improved myself as a person through challenging these tasks, I really did. I'm sure there are many other students who have the same opinion for the course!!* (E-mail: Personal communication, Francesco: Class 1, 3/12/2020)
4. 日本語で3000字のレポートを書くことは無理だと思いました。今、もっと書きたいと思ったから、びっくりしました。だから、このレポートのおかげで、私の制限を超えて、嬉しいです。*I thought it was impossible to write a 3000 character report in Japanese. Now I'm surprised because now I feel that I want to write more. So, thanks to this report, I'm glad I exceeded my limit!* (Comment on Self-assessment, Alessia: Class 2, 2/12/2020)

The comments above included concepts such as development and improvement as a person, confidence, beyond the limit, which do not necessarily concern language proficiency. This can be interpreted that the students gained a sense of self-efficacy and satisfaction for their

own achievement as a person. The students' comments also indicate that language education can offer opportunities for learners to gain these positive emotions other than just linguistic skills.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this section, it is possible to say that confusion had its role in the course: It was probable to regard the confusion as the indispensable element of the course where the teacher attempted to stop providing one-sided instructions. Other studies considered the relationship between new learning approaches such as active learning and students' anxiety for their success in learning outcomes (Bonwell &Eison 1991; Weimer 2013). It was also pointed out that some students refused to accept the student-centered approach due to their inexperience in this and uncertain feeling for this type of approach, although active learning approach contributed to increasing the student's motivation in the process of learning (Owens, Sadler, Barlow & Walters, 2020). These findings were also confirmed in the writing course. The question that could be asked is that, due to the uncomfortable feeling for the confusion, teachers cannot appreciate the value of confusion in the midst of this. Accepting such confusion as a positive element may be challenging for teachers because they get used to interpreting their role as instructing students in a top-down fashion. I also considered the confusion as negative elements that I should eliminate. However, Weimer (2013) maintained that teachers “must be willing to tolerate the messiness of learning that is happening right in the classroom” (p.81). It was likely true that the value system, where the teacher should instruct and the students should accept it, was changing gradually in the course. From the view of critical pedagogy, the confusion in the classroom may be a positive sign of the transition between teacher-centered learning and learner-centered one. The transformation might occur only after confusion and may become visible at the final stage of the course (e.g., in the development of the contents of their final

reports, in the students' comments in peer and assessment).

5.3 Sustainable Cycle of Interactions at the Middle Phase

5.3.1 Overview of the Middle Phase

This section examines the middle phase of the course focusing on group activities carried out from week three to week thirteen. The group activities were designed to realize the goal of the course to promote the students to actively engage in their learning and to express themselves in their own words in Japanese. The investigation of three groups of Class 1 (LICAAM) will show how the group activities increased the engagement of the students in their writing process. Active learning often incorporates small group activities to create an interactive and cooperative environment between students (Brame, 2016) while decentralizing the teacher's role as an instructor of knowledge. Especially in this course, instead of passively waiting to be corrected by the teacher each one of the students was expected to take responsibility for improving drafts of their own and members' writing through the group activities. As Table 7 showed, Class 1 divided 76 students into 13 groups (each group consisted of four to nine students). These group activities were carried out not only inside but outside the class, too.

Both in the classroom and online the students constantly developed their writing by interacting with each other in the group activities. Regarding the activities outside class, we used the online platform Moodle. Forum is a function that allows the students to interact online (e.g., posts and comments). Using this function, I created a channel for each group where only group members and the teachers could access. This exclusiveness of the channels had two purposes: 1) to create a more private space than in the whole-classroom for the students who wanted to write on a personal topic or who were unconfident in writing in Japanese; 2) to increase a sense of belonging to their own groups. However, I also announced

that the final version of the reports would be opened to every participant on Moodle, asking them to avoid including the information or anything that they did not want to be public. In the online group channel the students repeated the three processes until they completed the report: 1) to upload their drafts on the group forum; 2) to read and provide comments on the uploaded drafts of the members; 3) to respond to peers' comments and revise their drafts.

Table 7

Groups and engagements of the students: the number of online posts from 15 October to 24 November 2020

	Group	Participation modality	Number of members	Total number of online posts	Average number of online posts per person	Note
1	**Group A**	**classroom**	**5**	**83**	**17**	
2	**Group B**	**classroom**	**5**	**52**	**10**	
3	**Group C**	**classroom**	**6**	**32**	**5**	**Nicole**
4	Group D	ZOOM	9	91	10	
5	Group E	ZOOM	7	64	9	
6	Group F	classroom	5	34	7	
7	Group G	ZOOM	5	29	6	
8	Group H	classroom	5	25	5	
9	Group I	ZOOM	6	29	5	
10	Group J	ZOOM	6	28	5	
11	Group K	classroom	4	14	4	
12	Group L	ZOOM	8	27	3	
13	Group M	classroom	5	11	2	
Total			76	519	-	
Average			-	40	7	

During class time the students had time to discuss their drafts uploaded on Moodle,

and the students were expected to read all the drafts of group members before each lesson. To emphasize the student's responsibility, I did not intervene in the group activities online nor did I provide any comments for the specific drafts, although I read all the online interactions. As an exception, I commented on several students who did not receive any comments from their group members while they had actively made good comments for other group members.

I attempt to specify what I said in the classroom concerning the group activities as follows. I often said that students were expected: 1) to read all drafts of the group members uploaded on Moodle; 2) to provide reaction comments on Moodle, which could include positive and negative comments on the drafts as well as requests for clarification for words or phrases which readers found difficult to understand; 3) to respond the comments and questions that they received during class discussion or online; 4) to revise their drafts incorporating the comments and discussion. I often said, "Your comments help the members to improve their reports" or "If you receive comments, try to revise your reports taking into consideration the comments". On the other hand, what I avoided using were phrases or words that could indicate the group activities were duty (e.g., Making comments on the drafts is homework). Nor did I specify how many comments they should post.

The investigations of group activities used the number of posts (from 15 October to 24 November 2020) as an indicator of active engagement. As I mentioned above, I did not give strict and detailed instructions on the activities, and the students were not imposed to make the posts as assignments. It is therefore probable that the number of posts can demonstrate how the students voluntarily and actively engaged in the group activities. The Table 7 shows two numbers: 1) the number of posts each group made on the group channel on Moodle; 2) the number of posts per person on the group channel.

As the Table 7 shows, the gap existed in the number of posts per person among the

groups: The students in some groups worked more actively and constantly with the members while other groups showed less engagement in the group activities. According to this indicator, Group A and Group B showed the most active engagement in the activities (Group A:17 comments per person, Group B: 10 comments per person); on the other hand, Group C was less active (5 comments per person) compared with Group A and B. Overall, the interactions in Group A and B suggest that they involved the process of constant effort in the group activities while the members of Group C seemed to remain silent in the state of confusion. Nicole, who wrote observation reports on this course, was a member of Group C, and her reports were used to investigate inside of Group C.

5.3.2 Grouping

Before examining the details of the activities of the three groups, I explain the process of grouping. I grouped the students based on a previously conducted questionnaire. In the questionnaire, I asked two questions: 1) Please choose the one that most closely matches your theme. (A. literature, B. art, C. music, D. society, E.psychology and philosophy, F. history, G. language); 2) Do you come to the classroom or take the course online? Although the group formation reflected the student's choice of interest among the 7 categories, the teacher made a final decision on grouping. To increase awareness of responsibility for all the choices and outcomes, it might be more ideal for the students to move around the classroom, negotiate with each other, and form groups on their own. However, it was unfeasible for 70 participants who were physically divided between online and classroom in the course. This grouping process might make some students feel that they were forced to work together with someone who they did not want to. Actually, Nicole's observation report below explained how sensitive the issue of grouping was, especially in terms of motivation:

Tuttavia, mentre cercavo di scoprire chi fossero i componenti del mio gruppo pensavo

> “spero proprio di non finire in gruppo con x o y”. Ho riflettuto che in base al rapporto con i membri del gruppo, il lavoro può procedere più o meno seriamente, quindi è importante che ci si senta in sintonia. Per fortuna, io sono soddisfatta dei membri del mio gruppo. Magari una soluzione sarebbe quella di dare la possibilità di scegliere autonomamente i membri del proprio gruppo. *However, as I tried to find out who the members of my group were, I thought “I really hope I don't end up in a group with x or y”. I thought that based on the relationship with the members of the group, the work can proceed more or less seriously, so it is important that you feel in tune. Fortunately, I am satisfied with the members of my group. Maybe a solution would be to give the possibility to independently choose the members of your group.*
>
> (Observation report, Nicole: Class 1, 1/10/2020）

Successful grouping might increase the active participation and satisfaction of the students in the activities, but for the reasons above mentioned I could not let the students engage in all the processes of grouping.

5.3.3 Small and Frequent Cycles in Active Groups

The examination of two active groups (Group A and B) and one less active group (Group C) showed both positive and negative outcomes to the research question: Can the course without corrective feedback promote the students to actively engage in their learning? The two active groups demonstrated that the students developed their writing by interacting with each other even if they did not receive any intervention from the teacher, which includes corrective feedback. Online interactions of the two active groups were articulated comments and questions, always in Japanese, based on careful reading and analysis of other members' drafts. They provided both content-based feedback and grammatical-based feedback, which

were usually accompanied by an explanation of the reasons for these suggestions.

5.3.3.1 Group A. The interactions of Group A showed mutual influence in the process of writing (i.e., the students used online interactions in the group to discover their own expressions while they critically read with each other their drafts). Mariotti (2016) argues that students will claim their responsibility back from a teacher through a collaboration process in a classroom where the teacher is decentralized, and some students start to use their proficiency to help others discover their own self-expression in Japanese. In Group A, Francesco may be the student who used his proficiency and passion for other members. Besides earnestly improving his report, he paid attention to other members' writing process; he gave more review comments to group members than any other students. Moreover, investigations of Group A suggest that the student like Francesco also derived benefit from others as well as contributing to the group activities. His theme of the report was "Italian and Inclusivity", and the keywords of the report were “inclusivity, Italian, inclusive language, gender gap, sexual minority, asterisk, and schwa”. At the end of the course, he completed his report with eleven references that successfully supported his argument: Italian language should be more inclusive. To see how Francesco developed his report incorporating members' suggestions, I examine the comments that Francesco received from other members in the group channel online:

Online discourse of Group A

1	Caterina: 10 Oct.	サピア・ウォーフの仮説は、もし、Heinrich先生が言語学の授業のときおしゃったことでしょうか。Francescoが簡単な言葉でせつめいできたら、さすが天才です！！アカデミックなレポートは難しいことを簡単な言い方で紹介できて、それはとてもいいレポートの因子だと思います。

Is Sapir-Whorf hypothesis the theory that Professor Heinrich explained in his linguistics class? If you could explain it by using simpler words, you must be a genius! Introducing a difficult concept in a simple way might be a factor of a good academic report.

2 Anna: 8 Nov.
私はFrancescoさんの意見やテーマを選んだ理由がよくわかりますが、個人的な考えをもう少しだけで明示的にインクルードするかもしれません。例えば、単に「私は。。。と思います」その表現を使ったらどうでしょうか。

I understand well your views and your reasons for choosing this theme, but if I were you, I would explicitly include just a few more of my personal ideas or opinions. For example, you could use expressions like, "In my opinion…"

3 Pietro: 9 Nov.
特に、長所は例をたくさん挙げてあること、およびデータも歴史的な情報も徹底的に述べてあることも効果的な書き方に違いないんでしょうね。コメントしなければいけなかったら、Francescoさんの意見や提案についてもっと話したらどうでしょうか。

I guess you wrote effectively, especially the advantages of your report are many examples, and both data and historical information are thoroughly explained. If I need to make some comments, you can write more about your own opinions and suggestions.

The members suggested that Francesco could write his report in a more appealing way to the readers using simpler explanations for complicated concepts and his personal experiences or thoughts. Francesco might be aware of the points made by his peers, and he commented in self-assessment on his report and mentioned how he made an effort to write

this report so that it could deliver his message clearly to the readers:

> たくさんの情報や引用された部分もあるんですが、いつも私の言葉で説明してみました。そしてこの部分の目的は自分の立場を明らかにすることです。例や社会的状況のデータによって、私の意見そしてなぜこのテーマは切実だと思うかわかりやすくしたと思います。*There is a lot of information and references, but I always tried to explain it by using my own words. And the purpose of this part is to make my position clear to readers. The examples and data on the social situation which I used in the report made readers understand my opinion and the reasons why I think this topic is so significant.* (Comment on Self-assessment, Francesco: Class 1, 2/12/2020)

The interactions with other members in the process of writing helped his report avoid becoming too academic or too technical to make readers understand his argument. A report with too much information tends to lack self-reflection, originality, and strong argument, and therefore, often fails to communicate the author's opinions. However, Francesco, who might have this tendency, successfully avoided banalizing his report by incorporating comments of the members. If such kind of interaction would have not taken place, the most competent in Japanese —i.e., Francesco— would have not cared about the readers' comprehension and would have just ended up in writing a "perfect" but non-communicative report.

5.3.3.2 Group B. Online interactions between Giulia and Elena of Group B demonstrated that they critically negotiated with each other and co-constructed the meaning in Japanese. Giulia was writing about the influence of Minimalism on her life (according to her, Minimalism, which is a new lifestyle mainly developed in the US and Japan as an Anti-consumerism movement, encourages to live with fewer things carefully selected). Having read Giulia's draft, Elena asked for further clarification on the descriptions in Giulia's draft as follows:

Online discourse of Group B

1	Elena: 3 Nov.	「この無意識に内在化した消費・資本主義社のポイントのせいで、大多数の人々は質より量に大切していて、問題点が多いと思う。」この文がわったけど、「質」は何を指していますか？辞書に載っている説明であまりわからないんです。「質」というのは「安全さ」という意味を持っているのでしょうか。そして、一回ならず書いてあるので、「正常さ」という言葉は記事、サイトなどから出てくるのでしょうか？なぜなら、面白い使い方だからです。「正常さ」をもっと教えてくださいませんか。 *"This unconsciously internalized point of consumerism and capitalism make the majority of people value quantity more than quality, and this caused many problems." I got your sentence, but what do you mean exactly by "quality"? I couldn't really understand the explanation for the word which I found in the dictionary. Does "quality" include "safeness"? And you used a term, "normality" more than once in your report, did you find this word in any specific articles, sites, etc.? Because for me you used this term in an interesting way. Can you tell me more about "normality"?*

As Elena did, they often cited specific phrases or words from the drafts and pointed out that these expressions were not clear or suitable in the context. Besides, they often proposed an alternative to it. Not only the surface meaning of expressions, but the interaction also involved their perspective on contents. Below is another extract from a discussion between Giulia and Elena:

2 Elena: 3 Nov. 「確かに、イタリアも工業化国だけれども、一般的に他の国の価値観や毎日の生活と比べると違いがある。例えば、日本の場合にはサラリーマンが多いし、長時間労働があるし、いつでもどこでもコンビニに行ける。イタリアの場合には一般的な生活はもっとスローだと思う。しかし、最近はイタリアも日本やアメリカみたいにどんどん変化していて、イタリアでもミニマリズムは普及していくと思う。」この文は明らかでわかりやすく書いてあるけど、ちょっとステレオタイプになってしまうことがあると思います。ジュリアさんに書かれた文は間違えないと思うけど、言い換えることができると思います。疑問があったら、一緒に話してみるでしょう。

"It is true that Italy is also an industrialized country, but the values and daily lives in Italy are generally different from other countries. For example, Japan has a lot of office workers, working long hours, and so on. And you can find convenience stores anytime, anywhere. I think that life in Italy is generally much slower. However, recently Italy is changing and becoming like Japan and the United States, and because of that, I believe that Minimalism will be accepted in Italy as well." You wrote it clearly, but I think it may be a bit stereotyped. Of course, there are office workers, but they are not only people who work at night. In addition, the average Japanese is actually temporary female workers without a college degree. (According to an article recommended by Professor Miyake). I don't think your sentences were wrong, but I think these can be written in a different way. If you have any doubts, we can talk together about this.

Besides pointing out a stereotype of Japanese in Giulia's writing, Elena explained the reason for this suggestion referring to their study in the Sociology course. She also suggested that

they could have further discussion on these expressions in the classroom activities.The next extract from Giulia's response to Elena's comment indicates that the interaction between the two made Giulia reflect on what she really wanted to say:

3 Giulia: 11 Nov. エレナさん、色々コメントや質問してくれて、いつもようにありがとう。一番役にたったコメントは最後のですね。やっぱり、サラリーマンのステレオタイプを入っちゃったね！そうだね…ちょっと恥ずかしい、今！！
じゃ、それを書き直した方がいいと思うが、それだけではなく、深く研究したいです。「サラリーマンはどんな人ですか」とか、「Average*日本人はどんな人」など、もっと調べた方がいいです。私もステレオタイプを避けたいから、なんかデータをみた方がいいですね。*Averageは「平均」かな？調べてみたがよくわからないです。

*Elena, thanks for your comments and questions. The most useful comment is the last one. Yes, my description of the office workers was stereotyped! Right ... I felt shame for this now!! I think it's better to rewrite it, but I also want to research it more deeply. I should study more for "What is an office worker?" or "What kind of person is average * Japanese?" I also want to avoid stereotypes, so it's better to look at some data.* Does Average mean "heikin (in Japanese)"? I looked it up, but I'm not sure.*

Analysis of the interactions demonstrated Elena and Giulia had been gradually establishing a reflexive relationship through commenting on the drafts, and this relationship might promote discussion in Japanese both in the classroom and online. In addition, because Elena and Giulia participated in the same course of Sociology, they shared their experience and utilized what they had learned in the course to write in Japanese. This is not what I could do because I did not have the exact same experience. Moreover, the teacher could not engage

with each student the way Elena and Giulia did through group activities. The teacher had limitations: limit of working time, especially in the class with about 70 students and experience. Overall, Group A and B highlight the advantages of students' engagement in their own learning: Each one of us has a different experience, and each one of us could contribute to others in the small group activities according to each uniqueness. These mutual contributions may contrast with corrective feedback from teachers, which situates the students passive and accept what the teachers corrected.

5.3.4 Silence in Less Engaged Group

Conversely, less active groups tended to lack negotiations of meaning between members: The students often made general comments which anyone could make without critical examination on writing such as "I like your theme" and "Your draft is interesting! These comments surfaced indifference to their members, and therefore the comments could not provoke counter-arguments or any other reactions. Group C was one of the less active groups according to the indicator that I used (Table 7). The number of posts per person was 5, which was less than half the posts made by Group A (17 posts per person) and Group B (10 posts per person). Nicole, a member of Group C, wrote the observation reports, so I examined both her reports and the interactions online with her group members. Nicole was writing a report on a Japanese old narrative, "Ugetsu Monogatari". This is one of the comments that Nicole received from her group member on the draft:

Online discourse of Group C.

1	Silvia: 18 Nov.	とてもよく書いたと思います。ちょっと質問があるんですが、どうして特に『雨月物語』について書こうとしたのをよく分かりませんでした。説明していなかった場合、入れたらいいと思います。

> *I think you wrote it very well. I have a quick question, I didn't quite understand why you wanted to write about "Ugetsu Monogatari" in particular. If you did not explain it, it would be nice to include it.*

This comment did not refer to specific phrases from the draft nor did it provide an alternative idea. Compared with the students of Group A and B, those of Group C seemed to maintain a neutral attitude toward each other and remain silent. Nicole wrote the atmosphere of her group on her observation report for Glottodidattica as below:

> Ho notato però dagli atteggiamenti di alcuni membri del gruppo, che molti non hanno capito quale sia il senso del corso, che fanno quello che viene richiesto col minimo sforzo, rispondono alle domande sui propri temi senza davvero riflettere, e vanno convinti per la loro strada. Addirittura, A. non ha neanche letto i report/fatto le domande agli altri componenti tramite moodle. *I noticed from the attitudes of some members of the group, that many of them did not understand what the meaning of the course is. I noticed that they did what was required with minimal effort and answered questions on their topics without reflecting, and they must be convinced on their way. Actually, A. didn't even read the reports/ asked questions to the other members on Moodle*.（Observation report, Nicole: Class 1, 22/10/2020)

To conclude, interactions in the active groups (Group A and B) showed that the students co-constructed meaning in Japanese without the teacher's intervention. And two groups illuminate an advantage of the group activities compared with the corrective feedback from the teacher: the sustainable cycle of writing, receiving reactions, and rewriting. As the number of posts per person indicated, they kept this small cycle turn again and again until the final deadline of the reports. The circulation of responses among the students was small,

frequent, and constant, which contrasts with the more conventional sequence in language education (i.g., Corrective feedback from teachers tends to be a one-way and one-time action, where the teacher corrects and the students accept). It was also likely that the quality of comments was proportional to the number of posts online in the course. The stimulating comments provoked the students to respond to them and revise their drafts. Through the interactions, the students realized that their classmates, even if they were not native Japanese speakers, can cooperate to generate and express their own thoughts and express in Japanese in a way that makes others understand. This is the process where the students negotiated the meaning and discovered their own expression in Japanese. This experience might gradually liberate the students from a stereotyped relationship that premises “a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)” (Freire, 2000, p.71) in Freire's banking concept of education. This also supports the argument that teachers should decentralize their role of giving instructions while letting the students communicate by themselves.

Less active group paradoxically proved the quality of comments was proportional to the number of posts. Compared to the two groups, the less active groups did not turn on the cycle of interaction repeatedly; They posted less, and the superficial comments did not promote interactions among them. As a result, they did not experience multi-layered reviews before completing the final reports. This is a vicious cycle observed in the less engaged group. Although I repeatedly said that the students were expected to read other's drafts and make comments on them, I did not assign the posting activities as homework. I left margins for the students to let them decide how much they dedicate their effort to the activities, and this margin shrank the dynamic in the less active groups. Less engagement in the activities could be examined as an act of defiance against the course that emphasized the responsibility of their own writing in their own expression. Weimer (2013) observed that teachers often

encountered “passive resistance” (p.154) and “partial compliance” (p.155) from the students when the teachers adopted a learner-centered approach. She analyzed that passive resistance “appears as an overwhelming lack of enthusiasm” (p.154) while students who show partial compliance “do it poorly, or half-heartedly, or very, very quickly” (p.155). The too general and less stimulus comments observed in Group C might be consistent with Weimer’s categorization of the resisting students. On the other hand, as Nicole expressed her concerns about the group activities, the students in the less active groups struggled for changing the situation but they might not know how:

> Mi chiedo se questa mancanza non dipenda anche da me e se magari con un’attenzione maggiore potrei riuscire a far migliorare la situazione… Chissà se si presenta lo stesso problema in tutti i gruppi o dipende dalle singole persone che compongono il mio, oppure ancora se dipende dalla specifica combinazione di queste persone che ha dato vita ad un’atmosfera in cui non risulta naturale parlare del proprio tema con passione ed interesse. *I wonder if this lack is also my fault and if maybe with more attention I could improve the situation...I wonder if the same problem occurs in all groups, or if it's down to the individual people in my group, or if it's down to the specific combination of people that has created an atmosphere in which it's not natural to talk about one's topic with passion and interest.* (Observation report, Nicole: Class1, 12/11/2020）

The question is how I, as the teacher, could have reduced these gaps among the groups. As already mentioned, due to the setting I had made, the students could access only their own group channel on Moodle, so they could not know how active or inactive they were compared to other groups. This might block the good influence of the active groups from

spreading to the whole class. For future courses, I can attempt to increase reflexivity among groups, but at the same time, I also interpret the gaps as the consequences of attempts to overcome the fixed relationship between teachers and students. The members in the active groups became spontaneously active through the interactions, although there might be a tipping point where they became self-accelerating. However, this point was not intentionally created by an external factor like the teacher because I attempted to stop controlling every process of the activities.

5.4 Awareness for Their Own Japanese at the Final Phase

5.4.1 Overview of the Final Phase

This section seeks to explain peer and self-assessment that was conducted as the conclusion of the course. The question that I asked was how the assessment process could best agree with the objective of the writing course. Because I stopped offering error corrections, I also wanted to stop providing the evaluation one-sided way; otherwise, the course might lack consistency. The objective of the course was to transform a stereotyped relationship where native teachers correct and students are corrected. Instead of the teacher's correction, the students needed to repeat a cycle of interactions to develop their reports. So that the entire course was the process to construct reflexive relationships where the student's actions and thoughts affect each other in the classroom. Having examined these aspects of the course, I attempted to design the reflexive process of assessment that required the engagement of the students: peer and self-assessment on the final report. Peer and self-assessment was reported to contribute to increasing the engagement of the students in their learning process and outcome (University of Reading, n.d.). Mariotti (2016) developed peer and self-assessment in her practices of Japanese language education in Italy since 2010, following the ELP and Hosokawa's "Japanese for thinking" approach (2004): the participants

of her Japanese courses had dialogues and chose assessment criteria to evaluate each other. This dialogue involved a value creating and sharing process and let the students take the responsibility as a member of a small community. Ichishima (2014) also emphasized the aspect of dialogues in the assessment process that could involve value conflicts of the participants as well as sharing of their values. The aim of peer and self-assessment in my course was also to create an opportunity for the students to redefine the purpose of learning and writing in Japanese through the dialogues about assessment.

This section examines the assessment process in Class 1 (LICAAM). The process consisted of mainly three parts:

1) whole-class discussion about peer and self-assessment;

2) group discussion for deciding assessment criteria;

3) peer and self-assessment.

Table 8

Schedule of Peer and self-assessment process

	Date	Week	Contents
1	19 Nov.	Week 11	1) First whole-class discussion of peer and self-assessment. 2) Group discussion about peer and self-assessment
2	25 Nov.	Outside class	1) Deadline for the final version of the report
3	26 Nov.	Week 12	1) Second whole-class discussion of peer and self-assessment 2) Group discussion about five criteria of peer and self-assessment
4	3 Dec.	Week 13	1) Submission of the five criteria
5	8 Dec.	Outside class	1) Deadline for peer and self-assessment
6	10 Dec.	Week 14	1) Wrap-up of the course

For the analysis I mainly used discourses in the classroom and the students' comments in the assessment form they had to submit. For peer and self-assessment I used a function of Moodle called Workshop where I could create the form for the assessment and the students gave scores and comments on the reports of the peers and their own. The deadline for the assessment was two days before the last lesson; however, we spent almost 3 in-class- and 2 out-class meetings and activities during three weeks preparing the assessment (Table 8).

5.4.2 Whole Class Discussion after the Teacher's Proposal

This section investigated the whole-class discussion about peer and self-assessment; we spent two lessons on the debate about the introduction of self and peer assessment (19 and 26 November). I assumed that many students had never experienced peer and self-assessment before because Foreign Language Assistants (CEL) of Japanese at Ca' Foscari University rarely incorporated evaluation other than the final exam. In consideration of this, I decided to propose this assessment method in class rather than explain it as a decision.

Table 9

Points of the final evaluation

Final report Total	**6**
Teacher assessment	5
Peer and self-assessment	1
Oral exams Total	**24**
Total	**30**

Peer and self-assessment that I proposed in the course had the following features: 1) Each group had to choose five assessment criteria; 2) The students had to evaluate their own report and the reports of other three group members; 3) The average mark of the peer

and self-evaluation would have been included in the final evaluation of the course, but it would have a very small weight to it (1 out of 30 points; Table 9).

5.4.2.1 Meaning of Evaluation. The first discussion, which began with my question about what we should evaluate, showed that the students started to reconsider the meaning of assessment and to share their own value of writing in the Japanese course. During the interactions, the process was mentioned as well as grammatical and structural aspects of the reports. Some students majoring in Japanese might have a tendency to underestimate the process of learning probably because attendance was usually not mandatory for taking the credits of Japanese language courses in Italian universities (see also 3.4.3). This attitude may be sequential to the students' high preference for error correction by teachers, which is an instant solution for "correct Japanese". On the other hand, the classroom discussion 1 shows that this course seemed to increase awareness toward the process, which meant spending time and working not only for their own work but for others in this course.

Classroom discussion 1 (19 November).

1 Teacher: どんなふうに評価されたいですか。今までがんばってきたと思うんですけど、何を評価されたいと思ってるんですか？思ってたんですか？
*How do you want to be evaluated? I know you've been working hard, but what do you want to be recognized for or what di*d you want to be valued now?

2 Pietro [C]: わかりやすさ。文法じゃなくて。言いたいことがよく伝わったかどうか。
Is writing easy to understand? This is not about grammar, but if the report really tells what the author wanted to say?

3 Erica [Z] : 書き方、分かりやすい文法？
The way we wrote? Good grammar? (in chat)

4 Giulia [C]: プロセス、がんばったかどうかをみてほしいです。わたしたちは日本語を勉強している最中だから、間違いがあると思います。だから間違いがあるからと言って、評価が悪いのはちょっと・・・わかりやすさも、何がわかりやすいかは人によります。だからプロセスを評価してほしいです。がんばったとうかどうか。

I want to be evaluated if I did my best in the process. We are learners of Japanese, so I think we can make mistakes. So, I cannot easily accept bad evaluation only because I made some mistakes. And regarding clearness, it depends on a person what is easy to understand or not, so I rather want to evaluate the process. I want to be recognized if I did my best.

5 Elisa [C] 日本語能力も見てほしいです。レポートの構造とか。

But I want to be evaluated with my Japanese competency and the structure of the report.

Note. [C] indicates the students who were in the classroom. [Z] indicates that the students who participated in this discussion via ZOOM.

5.4.2.2 Meaning of Peer assessment and Process. The process as an assessment element became a more significant issue in the whole-class discussion of the second day. The students were motivated to illuminate the efforts and engagement of the members in the process of writing, and this motivation made them discover the meaning in peer assessment.

Classroom discussion 2 (26 November).

1 Pietro [C]: グループごとではなく、クラス全体を評価したらどうですか？

How about not only evaluating the reports of the same group members but of other groups?

2 Giulia [Z]: わたしはグループごとがいいと思う。プロセスをよく知っているから。

I think it's better to evaluate only the reports of my group members because we know well about their process of writing.

3 Laura [Z]: わたしもDさんの意見に賛成です。

I also agree with Giulia (in chat)

4 Federica [C]: グループで評価したほうがいいと思う。このコースは特にプロセスが大事な授業だったから、プロセスの評価を評価することが大事だと思う。他のグループのプロセスはわからない。

I think it's better to make the evaluation in each group. Because in this course the process was extremely important, it is really important to evaluate our process. I don't know the processes of the classmates in other groups.

5 Elena [C]: グループのほうがいいと思う。グループの人ならコメントを受け入れたとかがわかります。他のグループの人は成長したかどうかわからない。

The evaluation of inside the group is better. If you are my group member, I know if you accepted my comments or not. But I'm not sure that the classmates in other groups have made progress.

6 Pietro [C]: たしかに。コメントを受け入れたかどうかとかはグループの人しかわからないね。

That's true. I know if my group members accepted my comments or not.

As a result of the discussion, the students decided to assess each other only in each group, and each group needed to decide their own assessment criteria to assess their group members (i.e., Group A had to choose 5 criteria to assess the members of Group A). This discussion suggests that some students were gradually accepting the peer assessment as a means to demonstrate the effort of their group members. The students agreed that they could evaluate the efforts of their group members, and this indicates that the students probably

gained the confidence to understand and evaluate how their members had made effort for this course. The students were trying to find the meaning of peer assessment while they found their role which could not be substituted by any other persons including the teacher.

Besides, the assessment of the process for them probably meant evaluating more engagement with other members, especially exchanging feedback comments on their drafts, than individualistic efforts for their own reports. As some students' comments (Elena, Pietro) indicated, they seemed to regard the acceptance of the comments as the indicator to evaluate members' process. This shows that the students emphasized to see if their comments for the members were accepted, which also might mean that the comments were listened to, appreciated by the members who received the comment, and reflected in their reports.

5.4.2.3 Psychological Burden. Discussion 3, 4, and 5 surfaced a psychological burden for peer and self-assessment. As shown in Mariotti (2016), in my course too, the students seemed to be concerned about their ability to assess the reports because they were not teachers. Ichishima (2014) pointed out psychological burdens consist of anxiety and hesitation for assessing peers and themselves. The students in the course also showed a sense of fear especially referring to objectivity. They said that they were not eligible for assessing others, unlike the teacher who could be able to evaluate the students objectively.

Classroom discourse 3 (19 November).

1 Pietro [C]: お互いに評価するのはいいけど、試験の点に反映させるのは・・・。ちゃんとした評価にならないと思う。
It is a good idea to evaluate each other, but I'm not sure we should use this evaluation as a part of the final evaluation because I don't think it is a reliable evaluation.

2 Teacher どうしてですか？

Why not?

3 Pietro [C]: お互いにいい点を取りたいという気持ちがあるのをわかっているから、３０点をつけてしまうと思う。

Because we all know that all want to get good marks. We will anyway give 30 points to all.

4 Pietro [C]: たとえば文法を評価するのは、それは先生の仕事だと思います。わたしたちは日本人ではないから、評価できないと思う。

And for example, evaluating grammatical correctness is the teacher's job. I don't think we are capable of doing this because we are not Japanese.

5 Elisa [C] 自己評価はできないと思う。自分のことを客観的に評価することはできないと思います。

I don't think we can evaluate ourselves objectively.

On the other hand, Giulia offered the classmates a new viewpoint to see peer and self-assessment as an opportunity to evaluate themselves as they wanted while referring to the teacher's evaluation that she had received in her previous experience.

Classroom discussion 4 (26 November).

1 Marco [C]: わたしは先生じゃないから、評価するのは難しいと思う。

I'm not a teacher, so I think it's difficult for me to evaluate others.

2 Amanda [C]: 難しいですね。先生ではないから、客観的な評価ができないかもしれないと思います。

It might be difficult. Because I am not a teacher, I think that I may not be able to make an objective evaluation.

3 Elisabetta [C]: わたしはグループの評価がいいと思います。

I prefer assessment only inside my group.

4 Giulia [Z]: 難しいですが、わたしにはチャンスと思います。これまで先生が評価したときに、わたしががんばったのに、先生がわかってくれない、先生が厳しすぎるということがありました。だからチャンスと思います。自分のやりかたで評価するチャンスです。たしかに責任ですね、評価をするというのは。でもチャンスというふうにわたしは考えたいですが、みなさんはどう思いますかということを聞きたいです。

It's difficult, but it's an opportunity. When teachers evaluated me before, even though I tried my best, the teachers didn't know it, and they were too strict. So it's a chance. This is our chance to evaluate ourselves in our own way. It's also a responsibility, isn't it? We need to take responsibility if we evaluate someone. But I want to take this as an opportunity, but what do you guys think?

Regarding objectivity, the students referred to two aspects. One was their uncertain feeling if they could positively evaluate their own works (Ichishima, 2014) because they believed to have a tendency to underestimate themselves. Another was their negative attitude toward evaluating their classmates critically (Ichishima, 2014) because they could not ignore their classmate's needs to gain a full score (Mariotti, 2016).

Classroom discussion 5 (26 November).

1 Maria [C]: 自己評価は難しいです。わたしの場合、いつも過小評価してしまいます。

Self-evaluation may be difficult. Especially in my case, I always underestimate myself.

2 Teacher: 過少評価、みなさんにとって大事なコンセプトがでてきましたね。

Now we have the concept of underestimation, which may matter to you guys.

3 Francesco [C] 自分はがんばってきたから３０点を絶対ほしいという気持ちがあります。それは自分だけではなくて、グループの人にも同じ気持ちを持ってしまうと思います。グループの仲間も同じように頑張ってきたことを知っていますから、どんなによくなくても、仲良くなったので客観的に過程を評価することは難しいと思います。

Because I have done my best for my report, so I definitely want to gain 30 points. I believe that not only me but everyone in my group has the same idea. I know that my group members have worked so hard as I have, so no matter how good or bad the reports are, I think it's difficult to objectively evaluate the process of writing, and because we have become good friends through this process.

4 Teacher: Mariaさんは過少評価と言ったけど、Francescoさんは実際よりよく評価してしまうということですね。おもしろいですね。

Maria says she is going to underestimate herself, but Francesco talks about overestimation. It is interesting, isn't it?

Observational reports which I wrote right after the first discussion (19 November) indicate two strong impressions I had. One was a surprise; many students seemed to be again in confusion to hear my proposal to introduce peer and self-assessment in the course. I was surprised to see this, even though I had expected that my proposal would be controversial. This negative reaction can be seen as evidence that many students were so comfortable in conventional education that they preferred to be passive in the process of learning. Another

impression was satisfaction for the whole-class discussion followed by the student's initial negative reactions to my proposal. Only about 15 students of Class 1 (about less than one-third of the participants of the lessons) actually expressed their own opinions. Some volunteered their opinions while others were prompted by me. However, many students in the classroom stayed concentrating on the debate. This is an extract from my observation report writing about the second discussion in the classroom:

> I was fascinated by the discussion on evaluation in class, especially because this was not me who controlled this interaction, but the participants. Moreover, the evaluation is a REAL issue for all of us, and we should be proud of having discussed in Japanese the issue that existed in our life. (Observation report, Nishida, 26/11/2020)

It was also true that some students online turned off the video camera right after I started to point out the students to ask their opinion, so I accepted this as a message "I don't want to say anything." In any case, the whole class debate occurred across the boundary between the classroom and online, and the debate finally reached a consensus to conduct the self and peer-assessment. Not all students expressed their opinions, but the students who spoke up seemed to tell their opinions based on their value system because the assessment mattered to them. Nicole, who participated in the discussion, wrote her observation:

> Non è stato semplice all'inizio, ma man mano che le opinioni dei singoli studenti venivano fuori mi sono resa conto di come l'atmosfera in aula era molto più rilassata rispetto alla scorsa lezione quando siamo venuti a conoscenza di doverci valutare tra di noi per la prima volta. *It wasn't easy at first, but as the opinions of the individual students came out I realized that the atmosphere in the classroom was much more relaxed than in the last lesson when we were informed that we had to evaluate each other for the first time.* (Observation report, Nicole: Class 1, 26/11/2020)

What I attempted was to transfer the authority and the power for evaluation to the students. That authority was only equivalent to 3% of the overall marks (1/30 points.), but this proposal provoked controversy. Peer and self-assessment generated time and place for the students and myself to share the value of learning.

5.4.3 Five Assessment Criteria

This section examines the group activities in which the students discussed to decide assessment criteria on their own. After the whole-class discussion on the assessment, I asked the students to have a group discussion to select five assessment elements; therefore, each group could select original criteria that reflected on how they wanted to value and wanted to be valued. Even though each group was allowed to choose five elements to assess, many groups chose originality and comprehensibility. Table 10 shows the assessment elements that the students of Class 1 chose after the group discussion, and the number of groups indicated how many groups chose each assessment element. All of the 13 groups chose originality as one of their assessment elements while 12 groups chose comprehensibility. On the other hand, three groups chose grammatical correctness.

Table 10

Assessment element and the number of the groups that chose each element (Class 1)

	Assessment Element	The number of groups
1	Originality	13
2	Comprehensibility	12
3	Coherence and structure	11
4	Process	9
5	Accuracy of grammar and vocabulary	3
6	Attractiveness of contents	2

Note. The total number of groups in Class 1 was 13.

These decisions contrasted with what they valued at the beginning of the course. When I asked the participants to consider what good writing in Japanese would require, some students mentioned the external rules like grammatical correctness, but no one referred to originality nor comprehensibility. Besides, choice of process as an assessment element can be seen as a change in the student's attitude toward learning (nine groups chose process). As I pointed out in the previous chapter (3.4.3), because attendance was not obligatory in language courses, the students probably had not regarded the process as the value before the course. If so, the selection of the process can imply that they transformed their values through the course activities.

This section examines the comments that students made for peer and self-assessment focusing again on Group A and Group B of Class 1, which showed the most active engagement in the course activities. After the group discussion, I created an online assessment form on Moodle (Figure 2) using the function called Workshop. The students were required to read and assess three reports written by the students in the same group. The reports to assess were allocated automatically using the function of Moodle, and the assessment was conducted anonymously as we agreed with during the whole-class discussion. They needed to give scores on the five criteria as well as feedback comments for each criterion and overall feedback by 8 December, which was two days before the last lesson.

The previous section (see 5.3.3) showed that the members in Group A and B seemed to construct reflexive relationships in which they constantly reacted to each other to their draft and co-constructed the meaning together. So the assessment criteria they chose might illuminate what they became to value as a result of active engagement in the course. The comments on peer and self-assessment also reflected the students' view toward their own

process of writing and the course. By examining the comments, this section attempts to answer the research question and two sub research questions of this thesis: 1) Does a writing course without corrective feedback contribute to transforming the fixed relationship between native-speaker teachers and students?; 2) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the student to actively engage in their learning and writing?; 3)Does the course without corrective feedback promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese?

Figure 2

A picture of online assessment form on Moodle

5.4.4 Peer and Self-assessment in Active Groups

5.4.4.1 Assessment of Originality. Unlike other groups, the members of Group A

and B gave detailed descriptions for each element of criteria (Table 11 and 12) while many other groups just ended up making a list of five elements. The further explanation of the assessment element, originality, indicates that the members of the two groups wanted to see individual perspectives written in the reports.

Table 11

Five Assessment elements of Group A

コメント考慮 *Consideration and acceptance of the comments*
過程を評価するのも重要だと思います。そうするため最も効果的なのはコメントの受け入れ方だと思います。筆者はコメントを無視しましたか。それとも質問にきちんと答えて、質問を通してレポートを改善しましたか。
It is important to evaluate the process. The most effective way to evaluate the process of writing might be to see if the author accepted comments by the members or not. Did the author give attention to the comments or did the author answer the questions and improve the report through them?
オリジナリティー *Originality*
オリジナリティーは評価しにくいものです。しかし、細川もいうようにオリジナリティーも大切です。「テーマに対する切実感がわかりますか」「筆者の意見が書いてありますか」「どうして筆者はこのテーマを選んだかわかりますか」「インタネットからコピペしたようなものが書いてありますか」。オリジナリティーの点をつける時こういう質問は役立つと思います。
Originality is difficult to evaluate. However, as Hosokawa says, originality is also important. Does the report show that the author is really earnest about the theme? Does it show the author's opinion? Does it show why the author needed to choose that specific theme? Did not the author copy and paste resources from the Internet? These questions might help you when you assess originality.
趣旨のわかりやすさ *Comprehensible*
レポートを読む時、筆者が言いたいことがよくわかりますか」これは本当に大切なポイントだと言えます。メッセージははっきりと伝わったら、それは満点となります。一方、言いたいことがわかりにくくて、ごちゃごちゃしたらそれはだめです。
Do you understand what the author wanted to tell you? This is a really important point. If the report conveys the message clearly, you can get full marks. If the message is confusing and difficult to understand, you cannot get marks.

レポートの面白さ *Interesting*
テーマの「面白さ」ということはけっこう主観的なものです。なので、「面白さ」を評価する時、「テーマ」のことではなく「レポート」を全体的に考慮する必要があります。レポートをざっと読むともっと読みたくなるという感じになるか、筆者の情熱が伝わるか、レポートは読みやすいか、書き方のスタイルは活発なのか、こういう点は重視したらいいと思います。
If the report is interesting or not can be a subjective criterion, and therefore, we should not evaluate this only by a theme itself, but a whole report. We should focus on these points: Do you feel like reading the report more carefully after a quick read? Does the report convey tells author's passion? Is the report easy to read? Is the writing style energetic and enthusiastic?
コヒーレンス *Coherence*
レポートは最初から最後まできちんとした構成ですか、メッセージは効果的に伝わりますか。脈絡がありますか。
Is the report well structured from beginning to end, and does the message come across effectively? Do you communicate your messages effectively? Is there coherence?

Table 12

Five Assessment elements of Group B

わかりやすさ *Comprehensible*
レポートの終わりまで着きましたか。内容が終わりまでわかりましたか。
Did you finish writing the conclusion of the report? Did you write the report the way that makes readers understand what you wrote?
オリジナリティ *Originality*
自分の個性、オリジナリティが出ましたか。面白い視点がありますか。
Does your report have individuality, originality, and unique perspective?
プロセス *Process*
「積極的にレポートの書くプロセスに参加していましたか。コメントと返事しましたか。」と聞いて、評価します。私達のレポートがコメントで変化することも多かったので、プロセスが大事だと思います。
We evaluate the process by asking "Did you actively participate in the process of writing the report? Did you comment and respond to other members?" We believe that the process is important because our reports often change as a result of comments the members made.

構造 *Structure*
「文法」の代わりに選びました。「レポートのリズムはどうですか。段落分けとか、センテンスの分け方はどうですか。難しい言葉があっても、読みやすいレポートですか。
We chose this element instead of "grammar". How is the rhythm of your report? How are paragraphs and sentences divided? Is the report easy to read, even if there are some difficult points?
コミュニケーション*Communication*
参考したテキスト、話題に対して、新しい質問が出ましたか。Abbiamo rielaborato?
Did you create and ask new questions as a result of referring to the book, other resources, and topics you chose? Abbiamo "rielaborato"?

Assessment element of Group A and B: Originality. While Group B made a simple question to assess originality (Does your report have individuality, originality, and unique perspective?), Group A prepared these four questions for assessment of originality:

1) *Does the report show that the author is really earnest about the theme?*
2) *Does it show the author's opinion?*
3) *Does it show why the author needed to choose that specific theme?*
4) *Did not the author copy and paste resources from the Internet?*

These explanations of originality reveal that the members valued the reports that reflected the thinking process and their own perspective on the theme. Next, I examine the feedback comments of peer and self-assessment for Caterina (Group A) who wrote about her life story as *otaku*, which is a Japanese word of a person who is extremely interested in pop cultures such as anime or manga. Depending on the context and who uses it, this term can have a pejorative connotation; however, she called herself as otaku who was passionate about Japanese female idols in the report, and she seemed to accept her identity as otaku through the process of writing. These are the comments found in the peer and self-assessment form for Caterina's report (Group A):

Caterina: (Self-assessment: Originality)

アイドル界についてほかのクラスメイトが書いておいたけど、自分のレポートとまったく違うと思いました。例えば、自分のは留学中でじぶんが撮った写真も付けている。世界の一番唯一ではなくても、一応クラスの中で。

Other classmates also wrote about the Japanese idol world, but I thought my report was completely different from theirs. For example, I wrote about my experience during my studying in Japan, and in my report, I put the photos I took. This report may not be one and only in the world, but this is the one and only at least in my class.

Anna: (Peer assessment for Caterina: Originality)

カテリーナさんのレポートは全部個人的な経験に基づいているから、100%オリジナルだと思います。読んでいる時に「へえ、この文章はさすがにカテリーナさんの文章ですね」とよくわかります。

Caterina's report is 100% original because she wrote it based on her personal experience. While I'm reading it, I said "Wow, this is indeed Caterina's writing".

Francesco: (Peer assessment for Caterina: Originality)

レポートはCaterinaさんの体験に溢れています。それは一番大きい長所だと思います。そしてCaterinaさんの書き方のスタイルも大好きです！大学で教えられている日本語と違って自然な感じがします。文章の作り方だけでなく、比喩の使い方も上手です。例：「イタリアに帰った後、わたしは 陸に上がった魚のような感じでした」

The report is full of Caterina's experiences. I think that's the biggest advantage of her report. I also love Caterina's style of writing! Her Japanese feels natural and different from Japanese that we learned in University. Not only did she create the sentences very well, but she used metaphors effectively. For example, "After returning to Italy (from Japan), I felt like a fish on land(=a fish out of water).

Overall, the comments of self and peer-assessment indicate that Caterina and her members probably broke away from the external rules that emphasize correctness, and instead, their focus seemed to have switched to the unique perspective, expressions, and contents which only Caterina might be able to write. Francesco found attractive in her style of Japanese because it differed from Japanese in the textbooks; his attitude contrasted with Japanese language education that encouraged the learners to follow textbooks as good templates. The transformation might be achieved in the writing course that encouraged the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese. Further, Anna's awareness observed in her peer assessment comment on Caterina indicated that the students transformed their value system through the interactions for writing in their own words:

Anna: (Peer assessment for Caterina: Overall)

カテリーナさんのレポートはすごいです。レポートを読んでいる間、クラウディアさんの情熱を本当に感じることができました。 以前は私も少し偏見がありましたが、多くの人がクラウディアのやり方のように説明しようとすると、少なくとも普通なステレオタイプを越えることができるかもしれないと思います。

> *Caterina's report is amazing. I could really feel Caterina's passion while reading her report. I also had a bias (to OTAKU) too, but if more people try to explain themselves like how Caterina did for her report, we might be able to go beyond stereotypes that we commonly had.*

As Anna pointed out, we can overcome stereotypes or essentialism when we talk with our interlocutors using our own words; therefore, this course aimed to promote thinking by themselves, finding their own words in Japanese for expressing themselves and expressing them to an interlocutor.

5.4.4.2 Assessment of Process. The criterion of process was chosen to evaluate the process of writing. What both Group A and Group B gave careful attention for the assessment of the process was commenting in the group activities. Regarding commenting, it was probable that they valued more acceptance of the comments (e.g., answering the questions that they received on the group channel on Moodle, incorporating the advice into the drafts and, discussion in the classroom). They intended to judge the process by examining how much the members utilized peer feedback in the process of revising the drafts.

Assessment element of Group A and B: Process. In fact, instead of the term, process, Group A used "consideration and acceptance of the comments" as an assessment element and defined criteria this criterion as follows:

> *The most effective way to evaluate the process of writing might be to see if the author accepted comments by the members or not. Did the author give attention to the comments or did the author answer the questions and improve the report through them?*

On the other hand, Group B explained the assessment element, process, as follows:

We evaluate the process by asking "Did you actively participate in the process of writing the report? Did you comment and respond to other members?". We believe that the process is important because our reports often change as a result of comments which the members made.

Group B gave a more concrete reason to evaluate the responding of the comments; the peers' interactions actually contributed to change and develop the drafts in the process of writing. And Group B also mentioned responding to the comments as well as giving them. Peer and self-assessment comments further revealed how they perceived the acceptance of comments. These are the comments that the members of Group B and Elena herself made for assessment of process:

Elena (Self-assessment: Process)

はい、いつも私の支えをあげるし、コメントしたり返事したりしてみんなに助けてあげたと思います。そして、志のみんなの意見のおかげで、最初から私のレポートがだんだん変わってきました。では、みんなと頑張ったチャンスがありがたいです。

Yes, I always gave my support to the members and helped everyone by commenting and replying to their comments. Thanks to everyone's opinions, my report has been changing from the beginning. I am grateful for the opportunities to work hard together with everyone.

Claudio (Peer assessment for Elena: Process)

エレナさんはいつもコメントと返事してきました。そして、他のグループ員にもらった進めをレポートを上達ために使ったと思います。

Elena *always responded to comments. And she used the advice from other members to improve her report.*

Giulia (Peer assessment for Elena: Process)

グループの中で、エレナさんはコメントや質問など、一番頑張った人だと思います。グループのメンバーと対話相手の意見にとても大切にしました。

Elena is the person who worked hardest in the group, including giving and responding to the comments and questions. She valued the opinions of the group members and the person with whom she interacted.

As the comments of Cladio and Gilulia demonstrate, Elena was regarded as one of he most actively engaged members because she used the members' comments for developing her report. In addition, what Elena's self-assessment comment shows was that she was also aware of interactions with the members were essential for her report. The assessment for Giulia, another member of Group B, also referred to commenting as a contribution to the group:

Giulia: (Self-assessment: Process)

積極的にコメント、質問、返事を書いたと思います。グループの活動だけではなく、授業中でも自分の意見を表現することに頑張りました。外から見えられないかもしれませんが、とても恥ずかしい人なので、話す時にとても緊張しますが、他の人を安心させるために頑張ります。だからディスカッションするために、「クラスメイトの意見も知りたい・聞きたい」をよく頼みました。（授業の後にあるクラスメイトから批判されたこともありますが、私は後悔がありません！）

I actively wrote comments, questions, and replies. I did my best not only in group activities but also in expressing my opinions during class. You may not be able to see, but I am so shy that I feel very nervous when speaking up my opinion, but I do my best to reassure others. Because of that I often said, "I want to know/ listen to the opinions of my classmates" during the discussion in class. (I was criticized by my classmates for this after class, but I have no regrets!)

Claudio: (Peer assessment for Giulia: Process)

志のグループの活動のおかげで、みんなさんは非常に面白い思考が発展できました。ジュリアさんとコメントをやり取ることは積極的で役に立っている経験でした。

The group activities enabled us to develop very interesting thoughts. It has been a positive and useful experience to exchange comments with Giulia.

Elena: (Peer assessment for Giulia: Process)

けっこう、本当に積極的に参加しました。いつも、ジュリアさんのコメントと返事が私にたくさん考えさせました。私にインスピレーションとしてみられたり、インスピレーションを与えてくれたりする人です。そして、レポートの成長が明らかです。

She really actively participated. Giulia's comments and replies always made me think a lot. She regarded me as an inspiration and she also inspired me. And the growth of her report is apparent.

The emphasis on the acceptance (but not on giving comments) observed in peer and self-assessment surfaced what the students wanted to gain through the group activities: They wanted to know if they contributed to others in their group. They wanted to see their comments reflected in the member’s reports, member’s thoughts, and the member’s

expressions in Japanese. If they found that the members' drafts reflected their comments, they could be convinced to have contributed to the peers' development of writing. And this probably motivated them to give comments repeatedly and turn sustainably the cycle of feedback and revision. So the students who received the comments also motivated other members by responding to the comments they had received; This relationship is reflexive. This observation may be consistent with Mariotti's perspective (2016) on her practices: the efforts to tell themselves, not with fixed expressions, allows the learners to take ownership of place for learning, and this effort in the mutual relationship would make the learners generated as a concrete and real existence.

The analysis of peer and self-assessment provided a new understanding of how the students could become to feel like real existence. By seeing the reflection of their own actions in others' thoughts and expressions, they can feel recognized, respected, and realized. Through the group activities, the students constructed this reflexive relationship where their actions and thoughts affect each other, and this reflexivity might enable the students to learn by themselves in Japanese, even if the teacher did not supervise them. To conclude, the group activities offered a place where the students could obtain a sense of being accepted. However, before being accepted, the students had to begin with giving feedback to their peers. This can be one of the reasons why teachers should release their role of giving feedback and let the students take responsibility for their writing. Students need this responsibility to contribute to their classmates and to be accepted by others in the classroom.

5.4.5 Disawareness of Writing in Their Own Words

Before concluding the analysis of peer and self-assessment, I would like to reflect on plagiarism found in the students' final reports. At least I found copy and paste without

citation in 15 percent of the submitted final reports (Table 13). Plagiarism can be defined as the use of resources without citing the authors, but this section particularly focuses on copy and paste. The negative comments on the course were not found on peer and self-assessment, although some students, especially the actively engaged students, (e.g., Group A and B) wrote positive comments explicitly. However, the less engaged students may show their resistance to the class activities by using silence, indifference, and less devotion (Weimer, 2013), and it was therefore likely that the dissatisfied students would choose to spend less time and energy for the assessment rather than writing their negative reactions in the assessment form. So the comment on peer and self-assessment may give little clue about the students' dissatisfaction.

Table 13

The number of copy and paste in the final report

	Class1 LICAAM)	Class2 LEISAAM	Total
The number of copy and paste in the reports	**13**	**6**	**19**
Classroom participants	4	0	4
ZOOM participants	9	6	15
The total number of submitted reports	**76**	**48**	**124**
Percentage of copy and paste in the reports	**17%**	**13%**	**15%**

Instead, copying and pasting may reflect the student's attitude toward language and language learning. Awareness of originality (see 5.4.4) was probably accompanied by confidence in writing individual perspectives in their own words, and gaining this awareness was one of the goals in the writing course (Sub-research question: Does the course without corrective feedback promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese?). Federica's comment on self-assessment can be a concrete example of the students who focused on communication rather

than “perfect” errorless writing at the end of the course:

Federica: (Self-assessment: Overall)

レポートを書くことは大変でも、楽しました。初めてレポートを書くので、たくさん物を習わなきゃなって、今も完璧かどうかわかりません。多分、直すべきのことや間違いは多いかもしれません。それにもかかわらず、一所懸命頑張って、どうしてこのテーマは魅力的で私に大事な理由を伝えてみました。読む手には少しだけでもコミュニケーションてきたら、わたしが満足な感じがします。

Writing the report was difficult, butI enjoyed it. As it was my first time writing such a report, I had to learn a lot of things and I'm still not sure if my report is perfect. Maybe there are a lot of things to modify and errors. Nevertheless, I have tried my best to tell why this theme is attractive and important to me. If I can communicate with the readers even a little bit, I will feel satisfied.

What she showed in her comment was a sense of satisfaction that was attributed to her process of learning and telling her messages on the theme through writing. In contrast, copy and paste in the report can be situated as a negation of the goal of the course because plagiarism means to use both others’ perspectives and others’ Japanese. The implication of copy and paste found in the course was that the students were insensitive to the diversity of language. The students mixed passages they wrote in their own words with a direct copy of an external source, which was much like patchwork that two different styles of writing were put together. The students who did copy and paste seemed to be unconscious that the choice of a word can reflect the personality and background of the person. This insensitivity might be developed and reinforced by their previous experience in Japanese language education which encourages the students to write in Japanese using the textbooks as model texts. Some

students in my course might have difficulties finding boundaries between their own Japanese and Japanese in textbooks because they had been encouraged to construct Japanese based on the external model like textbooks. According to one student, a teacher told that the learner should begin with imitating the textbook first because non-native Japanese learners do not have Japanese grammar inside themselves. Although I disagree with this statement, I don't have time and space to counter this argument in this research.

Besides, it might be possible to find a correlation between plagiarism and online education. 79% of the students who did copy and paste participated in the course mainly online. This could be interpreted as online participants being less committed to the course concept compared to how much those who were physically coming to the classroom were. It remains to be seen which is the cause and which is the result: They might participate online because they did not want to make a commitment to the course; they made less of a commitment to the course because they participated online. In this course, the students constantly checked and reacted to the members' drafts with one another, and these interactions could promote trustful relationships that could make the members hesitate to plagiarize. On the other hand, as a higher percentage of plagiarism in the students online indicates, they might fail to build trustful relationships online with the teacher and other peers. As shown above, writing in their own Japanese might require a great transformation of their value system: This may not be always welcomed by students because it requires them to exit from their comfort zone in which the students just have to wait for teachers' correction. That is why it might be easier and faster to copy and paste than to think by themselves. At the same time, it might be useful to include more time for considering plagiarism as well as sharing the rules of citations: I actually used one lesson for this but it might not be enough. We can learn the rules of citation as the rules that enable the students to claim more

responsibility for their own words and thoughts and to write more autonomously.

6. Conclusion. Not correcting: Toward Empowerment through Teaching Writing

The main goal of this study was to find answers to three questions: 1) Does a writing course without corrective feedback contribute to transforming the fixed relationship between native-speaker teachers and students?; 2) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the student to actively engage in their learning and writing?; 3) Does the course without corrective feedback promote the students to express themselves in their own words in Japanese. To examine the findings of this research, I introduce Caterina's feedback comment of self-assessment (Group A):

(Self-assessment: Overall)

このようなレポートという活動は日本語学問し始めてやったことがありません。日本の学校でレポートを書いたとき、文法の間違いと固定規則を守らないというミスでけ直されます。という気分がある。でも、今回は自由テーマで、先生の監視より、お友達の助け合いで創造能力が高めたように感じます。満点にちかづかなくても、わたしは必ず上達しました！だから、後期でもまたやりたいです。*I have never done this kind of report writing activity since I started studying Japanese.When I wrote a report at school in Japan, I was corrected only when I made grammatical errors or when I did not follow the fixed rules. That's my impression. But this time, the theme to write was free, and I feel that my creativity was enhanced through collaboration with my friends rather than under the surveillance by the teacher. Even if I would not be able to get a perfect score, I definitely improved! So I would like to do it again in the second semester.*

Her comment encapsulates the essence of the objective and outcome of the course: She is now aware of her freedom and ability to express what she wants to in Japanese, even

though the teacher does not correct her. The further analysis of her comment will give us insights to understand what she gained from the collaboration with the classmates in the course. First of all, the Japanese word, *kanshi*, in her sentence attracted my attention. I chose an English word, *surveillance* as a translation of *kansh*i. She wrote "I feel that my creativity was enhanced through collaboration with my friends rather than under the *surveillance* by the teacher". As in Japanese *kanshi* is often used in phrases such as "*surveillance* cameras" and "under police *surveillance*", teacher, might be also a collocation of *kanshi* for Caterina. Caterina's comment indicates that she was liberated from the surveillance— teachers who watch for her violating the rules of "correct Japanese". Besides, she seems to have enjoyed exceeding the limit that teachers defined to make her creativity happen. It is probably because the process of writing with the group members made her realize that they could co-construct the meaning in Japanese without the teacher's intervention. It is therefore likely that she does not need anymore the supervision of the teacher that may protect her from making errors and using "incorrect" Japanese. Finally, she concluded her self-assessment with the phrase, "Even if I would not be able to get a perfect score, I definitely improved!". This shows that she valued more her satisfaction with expressing her thoughts in her report than the teacher's judgment.

Returning to Freire's phrase (2000): "the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing" (p.73), it is now possible to say that the course built a more reflexive relationship where the students' actions and thoughts affect each other in the classroom. The collaborations were generated based on this reflexive relationship that contributed to "make the boundaries between the included (me) and the excluded (other(s)) fluid" (Mariotti, 2020b). Categorization such as "I am Italian", "I am non-native Japanese speaker", and "I am not a teacher" can always be accompanied by the fixed boundaries that create two sides. The

boundaries may make the students stop thinking about what they could create and how they could affect others. In the reflexive relationship, the students themselves created the values such as writing comments, discussing each other in the classroom, and any other actions to co-construct meanings in Japanese. And at the final phase of the course, they valued the reflection of their actions in the member's reports, member's thoughts, and the member's expressions in Japanese (e.g., The emphasis on acceptance of comments was observed in the peer and self-assessment). This is a shift of the value system in learning: Some students seem to become aware of their power to make contributions to others in the learning process. Education under the dichotomy is problematic because, as Freire pointed out, this will never empower the students to affect the social situation where the students are right now. In this respect, Sato (2014) suggests that teachers, who are conscious of the authority and power that work between teachers and students in schools, should stop teaching to some extent. Throughout the course, some students seem to be liberated from the fixed boundaries, and now they do not need to ask the native-speaker teachers to fill them with the rules before starting communicating in Japanese. At the same time, they are now conscious of their power to affect the classmates, even though they are not teachers nor native Japanese speakers. The fluidity of the boundaries between the native-speaker teacher and the students empowered the students.

The fluidity of the boundaries in this reflexive relationship liberated me from functioning as the machine that is supposed to offer grammar checks. Because I am a human, I wanted to be included as a member of class not only for my nativeness of Japanese but as an interlocutor. The fluidity of boundaries allowed me to exist in the classroom, even though I did not provide error corrections. It might be because the students in this reflexive relationship in the classroom, contrary to what the previous literature (Hyland & Hyland,

2006; Leki, 2009) reported, were gradually decreasing expectations for the teacher's correction while concentrating more on collaborating with the classmates for improving their writing. So I am also included and empowered in the course. The full semester gave me opportunities to enjoy a variety of emotions that I could feel by reading: laughing, crying, intellectually stimulated, and excited. Because I did not have to correct the errors, I was able to be connected emotionally with students' works. "The empowerment of students seems to start from the disempowerment of teachers. However, the empowerment of students turns to be the empowerment of teachers (Mariotti, 2020b, p.450). The not-teaching approach seems to reduce teachers' authority. However, if native-speaker teachers do not correct errors, this action can be empowering for the students. By not-correcting, I can remind the students that they can write in Japanese without me, and their writing can make a difference at least in the classroom as a small community. So not-correcting is an empowering action that the native-speaker teacher can take in the foreign language classroom.

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