



Peer-Feedback to Enhance Students' Speaking Accuracy

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Modality: Research Report

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES: RPC-SE-19-N°.140-2020. Cohort 2021 - 2022. Author's email: joyceandreina.tenelema@casagrande.edu.ec. Guayaquil, August 31st,2022.

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Over the last two years, everybody has been forced to make changes in their lives. Students and teachers also change their way of studying and teaching. Teachers have to innovate their classes; online apps are now part of classes and changed face-to-face methodology to online methodology. It was a big challenge teaching online because teachers had to make more meaningful classes and make sure students were learning and acquiring the language.

Having an online methodology has its pros, and one was that students could have access to different online activities where they could practice their language, they could even be part of activities that require working in groups even if they were in different places. In contrast, there were students that did not participate in class, so teachers could not know if they were learning. One of the ways of realizing if they were learning and improving their speaking skills was by recording videos and receiving feedback from the teacher and peers.

This study was composed by 20 students. These students were studying at the A1 level, which was confirmed by taking a diagnostic test that revealed all of their weaknesses. Grammar and speaking were identified as their main problem. Students were unable to form simple sentences, making it difficult for them to introduce themselves when asked during the oral exam.

Despite their difficulties, they are active and eager to learn students. They enjoy learning English and have been employing gamification techniques for the past two years of the pandemic. The goal of this proposal is to demonstrate how using peer assessment can help students improve their speaking skills. Students, on the other hand, will learn to provide feedback to their peers and will overcome their fear of speaking in L2.

Literature Review

Academic perspectives and connections with authors' articles, theories, and summaries of the related area to the variables of this study will be presented in the literature review to provide relevant information about the variables of the study; peer assessment, speaking, and grammar.

Speaking

Speaking is a skill that students should practice in order to become more fluent in subtle and detailed language in order to be able to carry on a conversation. Most people benefit from developing speaking skills when learning a foreign language, and success is measured by the ability to hold an English conversation (Leaver, 2008). That is why teachers focus on improving their speaking skills in class. Speaking accuracy and fluency can be graded. Accuracy is defined as the use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in various activities, whereas fluency is defined as "the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously" (Atika, 1991, p. 12).

Speaking is the most important of the four language skills for effective communication in today's global world (Harmer, 2004). But it is also considered one of the most difficult skills for language learners to master. As Rao (2019, p. 97) pointed out: "Speaking is a useful oral skill that involves producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning". At the moment students are sharing ideas the social part is being involved. The emphasis on social contexts and culture is one of the most important aspects of language (Derakhshan, 2016). Language allows students to communicate with others while also allowing them to understand their values and cultures.

Grammar

Grammar instruction is important, and its primary goal is to prepare students to communicate effectively, whether verbally or in writing. Grammar is important in the four

language skills, and vocabulary is also required in order to establish communicative tasks according to Richards (1987). Nordquist (2013) discussed that most teachers give more importance to grammar skills, and they focus all time on making students learn grammar rules.

According to Wang (2010), language without grammar would be chaotic; countless words would lack the necessary guidelines for how they can be ordered and modified. Furthermore, (Chomsky, 1965) explained that grammar can be thought of as a language theory and its rules are necessary to keep a balance while developing the four English skills. As a result, grammar is a component of language teaching for foreign language teachers.

Peer-assessment

Peer assessment is a type of formative assessment in which students receive feedback on their learning process from peers rather than from the teacher (Tillema, 2010). It is a continuous process that has shown to not only reinforce students' strengths and reinforce their weaknesses, but also to provide students with the abilities and skills to evaluate and examine their peers'. Esposito (2011) explained that students are part of a collaborative work allows them to assist and learn from each other actions and ideas and it was also described by (Bryant, 2009) as a learning autonomy exercise for students. Whereas Carless (2009) described it as part of a self-regulated learning process in which students benefit from giving and receiving feedback from one another in group work.

According to Shaw (2012), when teachers gave students the responsibility to guide their own learning and assessment, they do it in a better way and get a higher grade than when the teacher directly assess their work.

Innovation

The experiment was performed with 6th graders of a private institution. It is a group of 20 students aged 10 to 11 years old. They were working on describing people's physical

appearance and personalities during this innovation. The study lasted ten hours, divided into two hours per day, five days a week (1 synchronous and 1 asynchronous hour). The goal of the innovation was to improve speaking skills.

Students' recorder videos and send them to a partner to give and receive feedback from their classmates. Using a checklist on which they graded pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar using a "yes", "sometimes", "no" scale. They needed to send the video to a classmate in other to receive feedback using the checklist. Before giving feedback, the teacher explained students how to use the checklist. The teacher gave two examples and when students were clear on how to implement the checklist and give feedback, they checked their peer's video.

Students completed four to seven activities, each of which required them to send it to a friend for feedback. Students went through several sorts of assessments, starting with a formative evaluation and ending with a summative assessment using a rubric.

Research Methodology

The goal of the research is to find answers to questions using scientific methods. This research will use both qualitative and quantitative data. According to Kothari (2014), action research is a systematic approach to solving a research problem. It is a science that studies how scientific research is conducted. It is a practical learning method used in the field of education to investigate topics such as teaching, curriculum development, and student behavior in the classroom.

A pretest was administered as quantitative data to determine the students' previous knowledge about the invention. A rubric and a checklist were used to grade students' recordings. Using a checklist, students completed a final assignment that was compared to the pretest to determine how they progressed. The same ability was evaluated as in the rubric, but

it was now scored between (0-2.5pts) The quantitative data will be provided by a rubric. Both were given to the students in order to answer the research questions listed below.

Research questions

Quantitative data

- To what extent does peer-assessment improve oral production among 6th grade EFL students?

Qualitative data

- To what extent are students motivated by peer-assessment to improve their speaking skills.

Participants

A total of 20 students (13 girls and 7 boys) were invited to participate in this project, and all the parents agreed to let students be take part. They were in the sixth grade, aged 10 to 11, and had a CEFR level of English competence of A1. They lacked prior-year knowledge that they required at that point in their education, making it more difficult for them to learn as quickly as they should. They demonstrated limitations in speaking accuracy, which motivated this study.

Instruments

A pre-test and post-test were used to collect quantitative data. Students recorded themselves describing their favorite person's personality and physical appearance for the pre-test and send the video to a peer. To collect post-test data was slightly different because students presented their final assignment, and they had to post in the online app. They recorded a video for Family Day on Padlet and adhered to certain requirements: Use the vocabulary learned in class and describe a special person in their family (personality and physical adjectives). Also, they had to make a one-minute video about their favorite person. They could show photos or dress up as their favorite person. and send the link of the video to

a classmate via WhatsApp. It was graded using the rubric, which evaluated evidence of correct vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, pronunciation, gestures, and body language. It was worth a total of ten points.

Data Analysis

The grades were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to generate descriptive statistics like minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Total grades and individual rubric components were used to analyze the data. A *t*-test was used.

Ethical Considerations

According to Alderson (2004), each and every type of information that a child shares as part of a study should be treated as serious information that cannot be revealed in order to protect the student. The permission of the institution was sought because the students were minors. Their parents signed a consent form allowing them to participate in the intervention and be videotaped. Furthermore, students were informed about the study's purpose as well as its significance in the field of education. Participants' parents decided whether or not their children would participate in the project. For confidentiality, students' names were not required, and they remained will remain anonymous.

Results

The results showed that students had improved in the post-test, confirming that peer assessment helped to improve students' speaking skills. According to the present results, students had difficulty expressing their ideas in a clear and organized manner when describing a person. Students had difficulty describing themselves orally using personality and physical adjectives. The pre-test evaluation revealed grammar issues as well as a lack of vocabulary. The intervention, on the other hand, improved students' speaking performance when describing a person, according to the post-test results.

Table 1.*Overall results of Pre-test and Post-test.*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Pre- test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
<i>Min</i>	20	4	6.5
<i>Max</i>	20	8	10
<i>Mean</i>	20	5.98	8.3
<i>Std. deviation</i>	20	1.24	0.96

Table 1 illustrates students' improvement after the four weeks of implementation they had. It is demonstrated that peer feedback motivates students to practice more and improve their speaking skills.

Table 2.*Results according to the categories of performance Pre-Test and Post-Test.*

	<i>Pre-test</i>				<i>Post-test</i>			
	Mean	Min	Max	Std Deviation	Mean	Min	Max	Std Deviation
<i>Vocabulary</i>	1.40	1.00	2.00	0.47	2.18	1.50	2.50	0.30
<i>Grammar and sentence's structure</i>	1.40	1.00	2.00	0.42	2.02	1.50	1.50	0.41
<i>Pronunciation</i>	1.50	1.00	2.50	0.48	1.97	1.00	2.50	0.44
<i>Gestures and body expressions</i>	1.70	1.00	2.50	0.59	2.12	1.00	2.50	0.35

Table 2 shows the results of the pre- and post-tests each of the individual performance categories. The results after the implementation had a positive outcome in all categories.

Table 3.*T-test for means of two paired samples.*

<i>T-test for means of two paired samples</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
<i>Mean</i>	5.98	8.30
<i>Variance</i>	1.54	0.93
<i>Observations</i>	20.00	20.00
<i>Pearson correlation coefficient</i>	0.85	
<i>Degrees of freedom</i>	19.00	

<i>T-statistic</i>	-15.89
<i>P(T≤t) one tail</i>	0.00
<i>Critical value of t (one tail)</i>	1.73
<i>P(t≤t) two tails</i>	0.00
<i>Critical value of t (two-tailed)</i>	2.09

H₀: In a private school in Guayaquil, it is NOT predicted that using peer-assessment will increase EFL students' oral production performance.

H₁: In a private school in Guayaquil, it is predicted that using peer-assessment will increase EFL students' oral production performance.

Table 3 shows that the results of the *t*-test rejected the H₀ because the *p*-value for two tails is lower than 0.05. It is demonstrated that implementing peers' assessment in a private school in Guayaquil will increase EFL students' oral production performance.

Training students for this innovation was difficult because they were not used to assessing others, much less themselves. It took two weeks of practice to get students ready to evaluate their peers. It had some drawbacks because it was something new for them, but it was also beneficial to the students.

Discussion

After implementing the intervention, positive results were obtained. Students can describe both people's personalities and appearances and have a conversation about it after several videos, peer feedback, and corrections.

According to Atika (1991), accuracy is defined as "the ability to keep a conversation trying to avoid having grammar mistakes. (p.3)". Fluency is defined as "the ability to keep going on speaking in a spontaneous way." As a result of having several opportunities to make the videos as the intervention progressed, their grammar and speaking errors were disappearing after many tries, and the message to the other classmates became much more accurate and fluent.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to use peer evaluation to help sixth graders improve their public speaking skills. According to the study, participants' problems with vocabulary and grammar improved after four weeks of instruction. According to the study's findings, students improved the majority of the categories of their oral production by correcting mistakes throughout the intervention. However, because of time constraints and a syllabus that had to be followed in accordance with the institution's calendar, pronunciation, which took more time to practice.

We can see from descriptive data how beneficial it is to use peer-assessment in our daily classes. A rubric was also useful so that students and teachers could see what they could evaluate and which skills they needed to improve. The pronunciation of the children in these groups motivates them to work harder. It is strongly recommended that teachers use these types of assessments on a regular basis to determine where students started.

Peer evaluation was crucial to the intervention's success. Students use a speaking skill criterion to evaluate their partners' performance in terms of vocabulary acquisition, grammar structures, pronunciation, and body language - gestures. It was the first-time students had to check their partners' activities and correct errors while also suggesting strategies to improve their colleagues' performance. The findings of this study can be used to undertake peer assessment to improve other language abilities.

Limitations

Despite the fact that the current study produced positive results, some limitations in its implementation should be considered in future research. Students were not comfortable at the moment of receiving the teacher's feedback or peers-reviewing their videos. Some of them found it interesting and engaging but the teacher had to encourage all students to participate in this process so that they can experience this process and improve their English skills.

The first limitation was a lack of time on the part of the students. Students were eager to participate, but they had to think about other school subjects. The second limitation during the innovation process was subjectivity. Despite the fact that students were constantly peer-assessing some were not honest and overestimated the performance of their partners.

Another significant challenge that appeared during the innovation process was teaching students how to provide feedback to their classmates. Because students were not familiar with technology, it was necessary to teach them how to send an email and a video to their peers because they needed to send their peer feedback as an email or a document with their comments about the video. Technology was a huge challenge to students during this whole intervention, but they made it through.

Recommendations

Today's Ecuadorian curriculum does not allow students to participate in alternative forms of assessment in which they are not only judged or graded by teachers. Teachers should begin encouraging students to participate in peer assessment in order to instill the habit of receiving feedback from sources other than the teacher, giving it equal weight, and considering the recommendations made.

Grades and feedback, on the other hand, may be affected because students are often intimidated by the fact that they are grading their peers and do not want to give them a low grade or negative feedback on their work. The teacher must explain that by making a comment, students are assisting their classmates in improving. Despite the fact that we live in the technological age, there are still students who are unfamiliar with sending emails, using WhatsApp, and other technological applications that can help with learning. Teachers must ensure that everyone has the knowledge they need to collaborate and work effectively.

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Appendix 1

Lesson plan

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Checklist

Available upon request.

Appendix 4

E-portafolio

Available upon request.