



Improving Speaking Skill Using Peer Feedback

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The current action research on peer feedback based on gamification to improve oral skills was carried out in a private-lesson English program in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The participants were A2 level students enrolled in different private institutions with high use of technology in their daily lives. The starting investigation within the English course, which comprised of the advancement of a supported monolog, made it conceivable to identify a few difficulties students had, such as a need of precision in linguistic tenses and plural things, battles to portray basic perspectives of their everyday lives, as well as elocution, the need of lexicon and familiarity.

According to Brown and Yule (1983), speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations. It is an important part of everyday interaction and most often the first impression of a person is based on his/her ability to speak fluently and comprehensively. So, a big responsibility is expected from teachers in order to provide learners with effective tools regarding speaking and communication skills since it is the main aspect people consider when evaluating how good a person using a foreign language is.

The current research project is aimed to improve speaking skills using peer feedback based on gamification to motivate students to take control of their learning process and be more conscious toward it. It will also focus on gamified tools and techniques to have learners associate their personal lives with the lessons to make the class more meaningful for these A2-level students. In fact, this process will them be aware of their learning and develop more autonomy.

Literature Review

Many factors involve the development of Speaking Skills. This passage was focused on defining variables and examining prior research. In this case, the independent variable was peer feedback with gamification and the dependent variable was improving speaking skills. The following concepts are developed in this section, peer feedback, gamification, and exploring research on Accuracy in Speaking Skills. Each has been explained in order to obtain a better understanding.

Peer Feedback

To create a well-aimed learning process, it is essential to find ways to check the goals. Nicol (2010) considered peer feedback as a viable means of teaching in circumstances when mass higher education is experiencing a continuous increase and diversification of the student population and at the same time a decrease in individualized teaching. It is a helpful tool when it comes to create an environment in which the lesson is supported by group learning. Peer feedback is not only a checklist of the main aims but a way to negotiate and present different perspectives while sharing opinions. Bruffee (1984) said that this type of feedback creates valuable opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, extend their critical thinking and reasoning skills as they take control of their learning through interactions with peers.

Gamification

Gamification is a newly coined term that reflects a social phenomenon arising with a generation of digitally literate population. Gamification has been defined as the use of “game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems” (Kapp, 2013, p. 125).

In Iraq, Khoram et al. (2020) carried out an experimental study involving high school students who had an intermediate level of English. In this study, peers provided feedback on their classmates' mistakes, and the findings indicated that students' speech accuracy showed improvement following the receipt of this feedback. The improvement was observed across various linguistic structures.

In New Zealand, Harris and Brown (2013) observed that the accuracy of peer evaluation is affected by friendship, animosity from peers, or lack of experience. Likewise, identified that while higher-achieving students can successfully work with more abstract criteria; lower-achieving or "naughtier" students need highly structured scaffolding (eg, checklists). The participants were middle-school students with A2-B1 levels of proficiency.

In Iraq, Adil (2015) in their study mentioned that most teachers declined the use of peer review for oral presentations due to students' insufficient training and lack of knowledge. Although some students found value in receiving feedback through this process, others were unable to effectively address their peers' errors.

Exploring Research on Accuracy in Speaking Skills

Okyar and Eksi (2019) conducted a study involving a group of first-year intermediate English students who were enrolled in the English preparatory curriculum at a foreign language school. Students were an average of 18.6 years old. The research findings indicated that the teacher's involvement in error correction decreased during student-student exchange activities. Furthermore, students exhibited a greater sense of independence during peer interactions, actively seeking help from their classmates when facing challenges. They established connections and supported each other in the learning process by creating

grammatically correct expressions. As a result, this experience cultivated a feeling of tranquility and self-assurance among students when communicating in English.

Nguyen and Newton (2022) focused on how students from Vietnam produced third singular-s. Besides, the authors identified the acquisition order of inflectional morphemes in English. This study was applied to students with A2 proficiency level during their first year at a foreign language university. It demonstrated that students omitted the third person singular but some of them were conscious during their oral communicative task performance. For this reason, peer feedback through gamification can become a learning tool where students achieve their goals free from pressure

Another study conducted in China by Hongbo (2022) addressed the significance of accuracy as a crucial aspect of task-based oral performance assessment. The findings of this study, focusing on young adult ESL learners with a B1 level of proficiency, revealed that pre-task planning had a notable impact on the accuracy of L2 (second language) oral output concerning thematic verbal agreement. However, it did not have an influence on L2 learners' usage of third-person singular "-s". This research demonstrated that there are some appropriate techniques to help some students. However, in the case of L2 learners need strategies more flexible to correct their mistakes and improve their speaking skills. On working with gamification, the learning process can be more dynamic, faster, and more effective than the traditional process.

The findings of Liubashenko and Kornieva (2019) support the positive influence of collaborative dialogue on students' development of communicative competence. Additionally, peer feedback has been identified as a collaborative approach that offers valuable information to students. Moreover, this strategy

enables students to become aware of their weaknesses and strengths, facilitating the identification and correction of mistakes.

Innovation

The experiment was conducted with A2-Level students from a private Online Institution in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The group was made up of 15 students. Because the pupils are minors, their parents signed a consent form allowing them to participate in the procedure and be videotaped. They are able to communicate in basic situations in which they need to use simple vocabulary and routine activities. They can also connect ideas based on their ages (not complicated ones). Since the outbreak, they have been utilizing apps and virtual tools to relate learning with their contexts, so that they have early experience with gamification.

They were working on talking about their personal information and daily activities. Since the main purpose of the innovation was to improve oral skills, the tool that was most related to our goal was recording videos and taking voice notes to compare and have a reference.

Students used a checklist to provide and receive feedback from their peers, grading pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar with a basic system. Students created four to seven tasks, each of which they had to present to a partner for evaluation.

A pretest was done to determine the students' aptitude and understanding before the invention to assess the results. Finally, students completed a final assignment that was compared to the pretest to see how far they had progressed.

Following the creation of a rubric, the same ability was assessed as in the checklist, with the exception that it was now scored among 1 - 5 points. Students go

through many sorts of assessments, starting with a formative evaluation and ending with a summative assessment using a rubric.

Methodology

This study is action research that includes the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data by educators in their settings to advance their practice and improve student learning (Efron & Ravid, 2013).

The action research project was carried out in a private online institute in Guayaquil-Ecuador. Data were collected at the start, during, and end of the innovation over a one-week cycle. This study was oriented to explore the application of peer feedback to improve accuracy and increase the degree of precision in speech production, for which the following research questions were addressed:

Research Questions

1. To what extent does peer feedback based on gamification improve speaking skills in beginner students?
2. What kind of attitudes would students have towards the use of peer feedback based on gamification?

Participants

The participants were 15 students (10 male and 5 female) enrolled in the second year of high school. Their ages range from 10-12 years old. They are A2-level learners living in Guayaquil. Their contact with the English language was only during school lessons, but now they are in a private English course. The participants have not yet developed speaking skills. Their mother tongue is Spanish.

Instruments

The instruments designed to collect relevant quantitative information were pre-test and post-test that were created using a rubric. A pretest and posttest were used to answer the first question *To what extent does peer feedback based on gamification improve speaking skills in beginner students?* The pretest was applied as the first step to identify the level of weaknesses and strengths of speaking skills students. The first social exchange before the training started was considered a pre-test and it was based on a recording that took place on week one, in pairs, the learners performed a scripted dialogue based on their daily routine and their partners had to provide feedback. The rubric was used for both instruments. It is based on evaluating student's oral social exchange when interacting in pairs. Its scale is composed of 5 indicators.

To answer the second question of this research *What kind of attitudes would students have towards the use of peer feedback based on gamification?* There are field notes tables that collect data from a researcher's observed experience in a specific setting for qualitative analysis. This table has four questions. Finally, the last intervention after the training was pondered as a post-test. Both provided statistical information to verify if there was an improvement in accuracy in oral communication.

Rubric

An instrument which grades students accurately is needed in order to get better results, for that reason a rubric is an important tool in this case. "A rubric is an assessment tool that clearly indicates achievement criteria across all the components of any kind of student work, from written to oral to visual" (Centre for teaching Excellence, 2021, paras. 3), and learners' oral production was graded using the previously created rubric based on task completion, comprehensively,

fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar with a scale from 1 to 5. The identical rubric was implemented both at the beginning and conclusion of the intervention. The data collected from the rubric was quantitatively analyzed, with the lowest possible score being 1 and the highest possible score being 5.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the students' performances were recorded and transcribed.

The data obtained was used to make descriptive statistics: minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Averages of the tests, overall grades, and individual components were used for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

To carry out this study, the parents signed a letter of consent for the development of the research. Similarly, students were informed about the objectives of the research, the processes, and their voluntary participation. Howe and Moses (1999) referred to a warranty in quantitative and qualitative research for strict scrutiny, and researchers should be aware that particular research methods bring certain ethical topics to the forefront.

Results

The two research questions that served as the study's guiding principles were taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Question 1: To what extent does peer feedback based on gamification improve speaking skills in beginner students? Question 2: What kind of attitudes would students have towards the use of peer feedback based on gamification?

Table 1

Pretest and Posttest results

Instruments	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Pretest	15	2	4	3.033	0.76
Posttest	15	6.5	10	8.36	1.26

According to the Cohen's $d = 0.590879$ effect size, the research improved speaking abilities. Based on the information in table 1, it can be concluded that using gamification helped students improve their speaking abilities.

Some of the observations noted from the implementation of the innovation were the following.

At the beginning of the innovation:

- Students found the activity struggling.
- Students were curious about the dynamic and they didn't want to participate at all.
- At first, as it was struggling, students got distracted at certain moments and they did not pay attention to their classmates' performance.
- They struggled in fluency due the nervousness and the lack of grading information.

At the middle of the innovation:

- Students found it interesting to work with clear rules and aims.
- Students were curious about the following activities.
- The students shared notes about what they think is important at the moment of speaking.

- Students looked forward to the teacher's feedback before the next performance.

At the end of the innovation:

- Students' willingness to practice increased and they even volunteered in the activities.
- Students took notes about the feedback delivered by the teacher.
- Students showed a good attitude toward the activities planned on the lesson plan.
- Students outlined of what they are going to say

Conclusions

To sum up, the peer-feedback process based on gamification proved to be useful and positive for students who have improved their speaking skills to a good extent in terms of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and interaction according to their level of proficiency as it was demonstrated in the analysis of the two research questions.

According to the field notes table, the researcher observed that the participant's spontaneous expression was being free of the usual anxiety and concern about making blunders in front of others. Participants said that speaking with their peers about a subject that interests them was a good method to develop and enhance speaking abilities.

Before using peer feedback based on gamification as a strategy to ensure its quality, the researcher noticed the critical significance that suitable training plays for the students. For students, the task of providing feedback was entirely new, underscoring the importance of highlighting the significant role of training in

ensuring the success of the innovation. The time dedicated to training students in the process of giving feedback proved to be crucial.

As a result, the utilization of recorded audios and peer feedback engages students in the learning process and encourages active participation. The pupils' viewpoint on English was changed by the contribution they exercised via the use of this invention. Despite the fact that this set of learners had never received peer evaluation before, their viewpoints on speaking English were changed.

Limitations

The results of this study should be regarded with care due to the limited number of participants (15). To test the findings, a larger sample size taken over a longer period of time and at various points in time would be required. The researcher found it difficult to modify the time allotted for the material and to put the method into effect without interfering with or altering the needed content that had to be covered each week. The deficits in vocabulary, grammar, and concept organization that students had at the time they were doing an exercise had an impact on how much they learned.

The activities in the classroom included working with extra themes from the curriculum and the English program itself in addition to implementing the innovation. It is also important to note that this group of pupils did not have strong study habits, which was another restriction to the invention. Occasionally, they had to check their recordings and submit comments from their homes, but only a tiny percentage of participants did so on time.

Recommendations

Applying gamification-based rubrics to speaking through activities can improve students' performance. The findings of this study may serve as a guide for

future studies on fluency, particularly those that focus on peer feedback in EFL instruction. The description of how to utilize rubrics is crucial among the recommendations, and deeper perspectives on what peer feedback is.

Peer feedback is frequently not used in classrooms by professors, which leaves students unsure on how to use it. It is advised to discuss the benefits of peer feedback and its potential consequences. In order for the results to be generalizable, the next study should use the innovation over a longer period of time and with a bigger sample of individuals.

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Appendix A

Instructional design of units for transfer of learning to real-life contexts

Available upon request.

Speaking Checklist Table

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Speaking Rubric Table

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Field Notes Table

Available upon request.