

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHER AND PEER FEEDBACK IN IMPROVING ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract: This study explores the effectiveness of different error correction strategies in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to university students. The primary objective is to compare two common approaches: Teacher Feedback (TF) and Peer Feedback (PF), focusing on their impact on students' writing accuracy and their overall engagement with the learning process.

The research involved 30 undergraduate students divided into two groups over an eight-week period. Data were collected through a quasi-experimental method involving pre-tests and post-tests of student essays, as well as a qualitative survey to assess student attitudes. The results indicate that while Teacher Feedback remains superior for improving grammatical accuracy and technical precision, Peer Feedback significantly enhances student autonomy, develops critical thinking, and reduces "writing anxiety." Specifically, students in the peer-feedback group showed a higher tendency to revise the content and structure of their essays rather than focusing solely on surface-level errors.

The findings suggest that a pedagogical shift toward a hybrid feedback model—combining the authority of the teacher with the collaborative benefits of peer review—can lead to more sustainable writing development. This study concludes that integrating peer feedback into the curriculum helps students become more independent and reflective learners.

Keywords: English as a Second Language (ESL), EFL writing, teacher feedback, peer feedback, error correction, student autonomy, communicative language teaching, corrective feedback.

Introduction

In many English classrooms, the teacher is the only person who corrects student essays. This is called Teacher Feedback (TF). However, many researchers now suggest that Peer Feedback (PF)—where students check each other's work—can also be very helpful.

The main problem is that students often just copy teacher's corrections without thinking. Peer feedback might make students more active, but there is a risk that students might give wrong advice. The goal of this article is to see which strategy works best for university students and why.

Literature Review

The question of how to correct student errors has been debated by many scholars in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Generally, the literature focuses on two main sources of feedback: the teacher and the students themselves.

The Role of Teacher Feedback Traditionally, the teacher is seen as the primary authority in the classroom. According to Ferris (2002), teacher feedback is highly valued by students because they perceive the teacher as an expert with perfect linguistic knowledge. Most students expect their instructors to point out every grammatical error. However, some researchers, like Truscott (1996), have argued that correcting grammar might be "ineffective" because students often focus on the grade rather than understanding why a specific correction was made. This often leads to "passive learning," where the student simply copies the teacher's changes.

The Rise of Peer Feedback In recent years, many educators have shifted toward Peer Feedback (PF), which is based on Vygotsky's "Social Constructivism." This theory suggests that students learn best through social interaction with their peers. Liu and Hansen (2002) point out that when students review a classmate's work, they become more active in the learning process. Instead of just receiving information, they have to think critically to identify errors in others' writing, which eventually helps them spot their own mistakes.

Comparing the Two Methods Studies comparing these two methods often show mixed results. For example, Rollinson (2005) found that peer feedback creates a less stressful environment for students, making them more willing to experiment with the language. On the other hand, Hyland (2003) noted that students sometimes doubt the corrections made by their classmates, fearing that their peers are not "qualified" enough to give advice.

Methods

To find the answer, we conducted a small study with 30 students in English class. We divided them into two groups:

Group 1 (Teacher Feedback): We marked all their grammar and spelling mistakes and gave them the correct versions.

Group 2 (Peer Feedback): Students worked in pairs. They used a simple checklist to find mistakes in their partner's essay and suggested how to fix them.

Both groups wrote two essays over four weeks. We compared the number of mistakes in their first and final drafts.

Results

The results showed interesting differences:

Accuracy: Group 1 (Teacher) had fewer grammar mistakes in the end. This is because the teacher's corrections were always correct.

Engagement: Group 2 (Peer) spent more time talking about their ideas. They didn't just fix commas; they discussed how to make the story more interesting.

Confidence: According to a short survey, students in the Peer group felt more comfortable. They said they were less afraid of making mistakes when a friend was checking their work.

Discussion

The study shows that both methods have pros and cons.

Teacher feedback is excellent for "fixing" a paper, but it is a passive process for the student. The student sees the red pen, changes the word, and forgets it. Peer feedback is more of a "learning" process. When a student looks for mistakes in a friend's paper, they start to notice the same mistakes in their own writing. However, peers sometimes miss complicated grammar points.

We think that, the best strategy is a mix: students should check each other's work first to improve ideas, and then the teacher should give the final corrections for grammar.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher feedback is better for accuracy, but peer feedback is better for building confidence and critical thinking. Teachers should try to use both methods in the classroom. This helps students become more independent and less afraid of writing in English.

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