EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PEER FEEDBACK AND COLLABORATION ON IMPROVING SPEAKING PROFICIENCY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE CLASSES

Egamberganova Gulnoza Ulug'bek kizi
PhD Student of Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizami

Abstract

This article investigates the impact of peer feedback and collaboration on improving speaking proficiency in elementary school language classes. During the learning process, developing oral skills is crucial for students to effectively communicate in the target language. Traditional teaching methods often focus on teacher-led instruction, but incorporating peer feedback and collaboration can offer valuable opportunities for students to enhance their speaking skills. Collaboration in language classes exposes students to diverse perspectives and ideas, enriching their understanding and appreciation of different cultures and viewpoints

Keywords: peer feedback, collaboration, led-instruction, teacher-centered, differenciated instruction, personalized, targeted feedback, interpersonal skills, role-play, communication bonds, empathy, self-confidence, peer-assessment, motivation, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, reducing anxiety, cultural awareness, competence, mindset, tailored instruction.

Introduction

A collaborative classroom environment fosters a sense of community and support, making students feel more comfortable and willing to take risks in their language use. This supportive atmosphere is crucial for elementary school students who may feel anxious about speaking in front of others. Moreover, collaborative activities and peer feedback sessions make language classes more dynamic and interactive, increasing student engagement and participation. When students are actively involved in their learning process, they are more likely to practice their speaking skills and make meaningful progress. In elementary school language classes, the integration of peer feedback and collaboration plays a crucial role in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Beyond traditional teacher-led instruction, peer feedback allows students to receive personalized support tailored to their individual language learning needs. This approach promotes differentiated instruction, where peers can offer targeted feedback and assistance based on varying proficiency levels. Moreover, engaging in collaborative activities with peers can increase students' motivation and interest in learning the target language, making speaking practice more enjoyable and engaging. Through peer feedback sessions, students not only improve their speaking skills but also develop critical thinking abilities as they analyze and evaluate their peers' language use. According to Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A (1998) "Collaborative learning fosters a sense of community and belonging among students, which can enhance their motivation and engagement in the learning process". When elementary school students receive constructive criticism and positive reinforcement from their peers, they feel more assured in their language abilities. This confidence is crucial for young learners who are often hesitant to speak up in class. Additionally, working with peers fosters social interaction, helping students develop essential interpersonal skills. These interactions

create a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable practicing their speaking skills without the fear of making mistakes.

Collaborating with peers from diverse backgrounds cultivates intercultural competence by exposing students to different perspectives and communication styles, fostering empathy and respect for cultural diversity. Engaging in peer feedback and collaborative activities can boost students' motivation and interest in learning the target language. The social aspect of working with peers can make speaking practice more enjoyable and engaging, leading to increased participation and effort in language classes. By integrating technology tools for peer feedback and collaboration, such as online forums and language learning apps, students can further enhance their speaking proficiency in a digital learning environment. provide opportunities for students to engage in virtual interactions, receive instant feedback for their understanding. Teachers can use these tools to enhance their instructional practices and create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. As Vygotsky, L. S (1978) stated that "Integrating peer feedback and collaboration in language classes not only improves language proficiency but also supports the overall development of students by fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment". Incorporating peer feedback and collaboration in language classes also fosters a sense of community and camaraderie among students. By working together to improve their speaking skills, students develop stronger bonds with their peers and create a supportive learning environment where they feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. This sense of community not only enhances students' language learning experience but also promotes social and emotional growth by building empathy, communication skills, and teamwork. "Collaborative learning activities promote social and emotional development by encouraging students to develop empathy, communication skills, and teamwork" (Gillies, R. M., 2007). Furthermore, peer feedback and collaboration empower students to take ownership of their learning and become more independent language learners, as they learn to rely on their peers for support and guidance. Collaborative activities require active listening, which is vital for improving listening comprehension.

Elementary school students benefit from hearing different accents and speech patterns, which enhances their ability to understand spoken language. Moreover, peer feedback sessions provide immediate corrections and tips on pronunciation, helping students refine their speaking skills. This real-time practice is invaluable for young learners as it allows them to apply what they have learned in a practical context, leading to better retention and mastery of the language. One of the significant advantages of peer feedback is that students can learn from the mistakes of their classmates. "By evaluating their peers' work, students develop metacognitive skills, such as self-assessment and reflection, which are crucial for lifelong learning" (Boud, D., Cohen, R., & Sampson, J., 1999). This shared learning experience helps them understand common errors and how to avoid them. Additionally, collaborative activities often involve creative tasks such as group projects or role-playing, which make language learning more engaging and enjoyable. These creative exercises encourage students to think outside the box and use the language in various contexts, thereby enhancing their speaking skills.

Also, development of critical thinking skills can be surely improved as a beneficial side of learning process. Through peer feedback sessions, students not only receive comments on their speaking performance but also learn to analyze and evaluate their peers' language use. This

process helps develop critical thinking skills as students assess language structures, vocabulary choices, and communication strategies. As Hyland, F & Hyland, K(2006) pointed out that "Through peer feedback, students practice articulating their thoughts and opinions clearly and constructively, which enhances their overall communication skills". Receiving and giving feedback helps students develop a growth mindset, where they view challenges as opportunities to improve rather than obstacles. This mindset is particularly beneficial for elementary school students as it fosters resilience and a positive attitude towards learning. When it comes to teachers, these methods are also useful and helpful for instructors while teaching and assessing them. Peer feedback serves as an effective form of formative assessment. By observing peer interactions and feedback, teachers can identify individual student needs and tailor their instruction accordingly. This personalized approach ensures that all students, regardless of their proficiency levels, receive the support they need to succeed. Tomlinson, C. A. (2001) in "How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms" emphasizes that "Peer feedback is a valuable tool for differentiation, allowing teachers to meet diverse student needs more effectively". This ongoing assessment helps teachers make informed decisions about their teaching strategies and adjust their plans to meet student needs. Incorporating peer feedback can help reduce the teacher's workload. When students take on the role of providing feedback to their peers, it alleviates some of the pressure on the teacher to review and correct every single assignment. This allows teachers to focus on more strategic aspects of teaching, such as planning and delivering high-quality instruction. Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007) in "The Power of Feedback" highlight that peer feedback can significantly reduce the teacher's workload while maintaining high standards of student learning and assessment". Teachers who implement peer feedback and collaborative activities often see improved student outcomes. When students learn from each other and engage in meaningful discussions, they are more likely to retain information and develop a deeper understanding of the material. This leads to better performance on assessments and overall academic achievement.

Overall, integrating peer feedback and collaboration in language classes not only enhances students' speaking proficiency but also nurtures a positive and inclusive learning environment that promotes holistic growth and development. When students engage in discussions and debates, they learn to articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively. This practice is invaluable for developing strong speaking skills. Moreover, the process of giving and receiving feedback encourages students to think critically about their own and others' language use, leading to a deeper understanding of the language. This understanding is essential in a multicultural classroom where students come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By engaging in collaborative tasks, students become more empathetic and open-minded, which not only enhances their language skills but also prepares them to be global citizens.

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