Peer Feedback versus Traditional Teaching

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Abstract

The choice of methods of teaching English depends on the specific features of the subject being taught, certain didactic tasks, student knowledge, specific situations, real means that the teacher has and his experience. The traditional school often represents the teacher as an active unit of learning and the teaching - as an object of learning (passive unit). However, this situation, in the process of learning, can and must change. Especially when the student also becomes an active participant in the learning process and there is targeted cooperation between the teacher and the student. Thanks to the feedback method, there are links between the goal, content and the result of the educational process. The results are observed in the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and skills of students. It helps learners to maximize their potential at different stages of training, raise their awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, and identify actions to be taken to improve performance. Feedback is part of the overall dialogue or interaction between teacher and learner, not a one-way communication. Feedback can be seen as informal or formal encounters between teachers and students or between peers. The purpose of the article is to summarize the arguments in favor of introducing peer feedback practice for English language classrooms. The discussion is based on the analysis of the most effective forms of feedback with a special focus on peer feedback.

Keywords: *feedback, interaction, dialogue, method of teaching, targeted cooperation, peers assessment*

INTRODUCTION

In pedagogical practice, the method acts as an orderly way of working towards the achievement of educational objectives. At the same time, the methods of teaching activity of a teacher and the methods of learning activity of students are closely interrelated and interact. The notion of the teaching method also reflects the didactic goals and objectives of the educational activity, in solving which, in the teaching process, the appropriate methods of teaching and cognitive activity of the students are applied. Thus, teaching methods are the ways that teachers and students work together to address learning problems.

There are numerous methods of English teaching, the choice of which depends on the purpose set by the teacher. The natural approach method, the grammar-translation or audio-visual methods, as well as communicative one, have already proved their effectiveness. They are well known and widely used in class. A culmination may be a wise combination of all possible methods. Without the choice of appropriate methods, it is impossible to achieve the goals in both theoretical and practical training. The growing need to get clear guidance on how to enhance the effectiveness of learning brought about a growing body of research which proved feedback as an undeniable key element in language learning, which can throw the light on the subject area via its social and cognitive benefits. Narciss (2008) considers feedback to be "all post-response information" which is given to inform the learner "on his or her actual state of learning or performance"(p.127). We can also refer to A New Dictionary of Methodological Terms and Notions (Asimov and Shchukin 2009), which defines feedback as "the modification or control of a process or system by its results or effects, for example in a biochemical pathway or behavioral response"(p.130).

We suggest that peer feedback currently has the growing potential for learning and it needs to be encouraged and integrated into some combination with teacher's feedback into the general assessment procedure, which seems to be necessary for pragmatic reasons. Yet our observation is that by learning together with the students rarely or never assess each other in a classroom. Surprisingly few studies have focused on the issue of effective strategies and encouraging peer feedback, which makes our study relevant to educational needs. Getting deeper into the nature of the feedback would reveal how students could give peer support to one another and give a better vision of what kind of assistance teachers need to provide in the classroom.

This article aims at considering the pre-conditions of effective peer feedback and to outline the strategies that work best for English language learners.

Why feedback?
Teacher-student interaction
Feedback provides a link between the teacher's assessment of a student and the action that follows the assessment. Alain Bouvier and Philippe Duval (2019) insist on the necessity of changing the traditional forms of assessment. There are numerous forms of it, each of which serves its own purpose. They allow interactive learning, which is built on the interaction of all students, including the teacher. In other words, they are focused on the wider interaction of students not only with the teacher but also with each other and the dominance of student activity in the learning process. These forms are most consistent with the personality-oriented approach, since they involve co-learning (learning in cooperation), and the student and the teacher are subjects of the educational process. According to Elaine Boyd (2003), the teacher more often acts only as an organizer of the learning process, group leader, facilitator, and creator of conditions for the initiative of students.

Forms and strategies
Feedback can be seen as formal, informal, formative and summative. Formal feedback can be used regularly as a planned and integral part of the learning process. It mostly concerns the assessment tasks and means marking competencies or achievements of standards. As a rule, it is systematically recorded for both students and institutions to serve as evidence of students' progress (Gielen et al., 2010, p. 310).

To make the learning process more interesting it is important to use different methods of feedback in the classroom. There is no doubt that each form has its pros and cons. We can see this statement in the works of specialists in teaching methods of different national schools (e.g. Sackstein, 2017; Arutiunian, 1981; Malynochka, 1998; Tkachenko, 2003). The student can comment orally on the work or performance of another student, taking into account the learning outcomes and evaluation criteria. Oral feedback can also be used to support written feedback to clarify certain comments. There are many ways to do a peer assessment in writing. One of these ways is to provide the student with a peer assessment form that includes the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Students can examine the work or the performance of their peer to identify what is learned and what they need to work on. An oral individual survey allows the teacher to assess the student's knowledge in full, forms the skills of monologue speech, but it takes a lot of time to do this survey, and the discipline suffers because the rest of the students are bored and uninterested. To solve the problem, the teacher can combine an oral survey of one student with a written survey of all others; he can offer the class to make simultaneously a plan of the response of their peer or to note the strengths and weaknesses in a special table; the answer can be recorded on a laptop to be compared later with the answers of other students to the same question.

Informal feedback can spontaneously emerge at any time in the classroom, on the phone or in an online workshop. This form is intended to encourage and guide and requires a certain individual approach to influence effectively on a students' decision-making study-related process. In the process of explaining the new material informal feedback, if used from time to time, helps not only to keep the class in active working condition but also control whether the students understand the explanation. For example, it is possible by asking brief questions on the explanation (Why did it happen? Was it a good solution? Did you like what you did...?) It is even more interesting to offer forecast questions: Do you think this solved the problem? Was he right? What can come of it? Is it possible to achieve a result in this way?

Formative feedback serves to monitor the student's progress and can be used systematically to help both teachers and students improve their performance. It also makes it possible for students to avoid making the same mistakes. Using feedback the teacher receives information about the nature and quality of teaching, which allows him to carry out training, education and developmental control in the classroom. Such control, in our opinion, contributes to the development of self-control skills in high-school students, which show the level of the learning process. Thus, the feedback mechanism makes it possible for the teacher to be promptly monitored, allowing him to improve his professional pedagogical skills, both in school work and also in extra-curricular activities.

Summative feedback aims to evaluate student's progress at the end of a course and represents various comments on specific aspects of learning by comparing them against the criteria provided by the syllabus. It can also suggest how performance could be improved.

Alongside traditional forms of teacher's feedback students can learn from giving peer feedback with basic instruction and constant support. It serves to encourage students to give quality feedback, thus enriching their experience and enlarging the scope of their professional skills. Peer feedback can also be perceived as grading the work or performance of their peers using relevant criteria (Falchikov, 2001).

The following patterns of feedback methods as individual, group, or collective, and self-control forms can be used by the teacher.

Individual feedback is carried out from the student to the teacher and vice versa. In the first case, the student's statement provides the teacher with information about his language level and allows him to develop a strategy for further education. When performing feedback on the "teacher-student" type, the teacher, using verbal and non-verbal means, assesses the student's speech behavior and the correctness of the assignment in the educational process.

Practice shows that in the case of group or collective feedback, students in a classroom can exchange views on the learning process with each other or with the teacher. This feedback form is widely used in the foreign methodology when surveying students to improve the course program, revise its components and materials used.

Self-assessment is carried out on two levels. First of all, the student controls the process of his speech, choosing the correct lexical and grammatical forms, predicting the content of the utterance. Self-control also implies an own assessment of the results of the exercise, when the student analyzes how well he can master specific skills and abilities and what remains to be done to more effectively master the English language. To help the students gain learning autonomy, teachers have an opportunity to give them instructions on self-assessment and goal-setting and reflection. That can be defined as the ultimate goal of feedback, which manifests itself as self-feedback.

Feedback or feedforward?

Considering the aspects of feedback we can distinguish between positive (affirming comments about past performance,) constructive and negative (corrective comments about past performance) ones. Constructive feedback is issue-focused and based on observation. As related to the future performance, the concept was originally developed by a management expert Marshall Goldsmith (2007), whose idea is that feedforward "helps people envision and focus on a positive future, not a failed past". We need to specify on the term feedforward which means learning from one's desired behavior in the future with the focus on the behavior which should be avoided (negative feedforward) or will improve performance in the future (positive feedforward).

The form of feedback includes the medium of expression (written, oral or otherwise), tone, style (which can be negative, positive or constructive), structure, length, and complexity. Coupled with other characteristics such as its desirability (whether the feedback is solicited or not?) and timing, the form has a certain influence on the effectiveness of the feedback and how it is received. Thus, it should not be surprising that the style and tone employed often have a greater impact than the content itself, depending on the level of the affective autonomy of the receiver.

Positive feedback emphasizes the strengths of the presented work. Such assessments like " *I appreciate the explanations about… It makes the theory easier to understand. Chapter 2 is very complete. Your use of available resources is excellent. The whole job is very interesting. I like the presentation*." can increase motivation and enable to improve strategies already in use.

Constructive feedback suggests tracks to explore. Saying: *"I think if there were examples of point X, it would improve understanding. What do you think? A table would complete this part. This section would benefit... Maybe you could talk about it in the forum? Do you know the work of X? There is a chapter in his book that talks about this problem. A search on the Y site could allow you to find other arguments. I'm not sure I*

understand the part of... It looks like it's missing information. The idea presented is interesting, but it deserves to be elaborated by adding..." should encourage in-depth knowledge. It is generally effective.

Negative feedback is critical or carries a value judgment. *"There is nothing valid throughout the first part. Looks like it's written by a high school student. I think it's all over again. I do not understand this paragraph: it is badly written. It's too long and complicated."* These may cause a defensive attitude, a feeling of discouragement and a depreciation of the person. Negative comments are Ineffective and harmful; they should, therefore, be used sparingly. We will prefer positive and constructive comments.

Before proceeding, we need to specify more on the term "peer feedback". By peer feedback, we understand a process of communication the learners use to exchange opinions related to performance and standards of learning. Peer feedback primarily means elaborate comments or criticism with the focus on improved learning. The strategies of peer feedback can be considered as the following:
1) Using typical examples or appropriate models;
2) Getting to feedforward with the focus on positive and negative aspects;
3) Using a developed set of instructions and rules for different types of activities.

Using typical examples or appropriate models
A student is exposed to an exemplar of writing, which most closely meets the requirements for style, layout, etc. A teacher explains how peer work can be matched to an exemplar. Students suggest the changes the peers need to make to improve their writing and refer their comments to an appropriate model. The same strategy can also be applied to speaking activities. For example, students listen to one or several sample speakers doing the task and then compare their performance to that of their group mates. Peer feedback on speaking is given with the focus on grammar and vocabulary accuracy, discourse management, pronunciation, etc.

Getting to 'feedforward' with the focus on positive and negative aspects
This strategy could be used to focus students' feedback to their peers by encouraging them to think from different perspectives. Again, teachers are to model the use of both thinking strategies and get the students to practice their use. We suspect many students would feel reluctant to give negative reviews on peers' performance. If they are not enthusiastic to answer the questions like 'what things should be avoided in future to make a better performance?', the teacher could encourage creative thinking: 'How else could this be done?' or 'What is the way to make it better?' This approach enhances students' ability to give constructive feedback. The teacher can also divide the group into 2 teams with the focus on positive or negative aspects of peers' performance, which could spare less experienced learners the trouble to concentrate on every aspect.

Using a developed set of instructions and rules for different types of activities
The strategy implies that each student is given a form with ready-made criteria for evaluating the performance, which could relate it to high/medium/low level. A valuable learning activity would be pre-discussing how this form could be applied to a model performance. For example, by giving a peer' feedback on 'for and against essay' we can apply the criterion 'knowledge of the justifications to support for/against arguments'. Here students need to capture the difference between the levels of performance and tick

the appropriate option, e.g. 'accurate information and opinions of others have been used to show why the presenter partly or totally disagrees with a viewpoint'(high-level performance); 'the presenter tries to show why he/she disagrees with the viewpoint by only using some evidence to support his/her idea'(medium-level performance); ' the presenter provides a little evidence to support his/her point of view' (low-level performance).

It is impossible to progress in learning if the student does not have an understanding of whether he is moving in the right direction. Without a constructive response and instruction, there is simply no room for improvement. And the task as a tutor is not just to evaluate, praise, criticize, but to substitute an expert-friendly shoulder in the form of timely, objective and detailed feedback.

Making it work better

At the earlier stage, students could be granted the opportunity to provide peer feedback to each other without any criteria or framework to use. By interviewing students the teacher discovers what kind of feedback they received and to what extent it was found useful.

The technique of "*learning from each other*" contributes to a deeper understanding of the topic - when feedback comes not only from the teacher but also from other students on the course. The creation of discussion in a closed group may become a communication platform where students can download and evaluate each other's work, exchange opinions and comments on the progress of their colleagues. By the way, it is proved that complex topics are easier to learn when a student who has just studied this material explains them. Using this technique, you will be able to turn students from passive knowledge recipients into active ones, make them think independently, teach them to work in a team and competently defend their ideas.

Case study (learning from practical examples) is one of the most effective ways to give feedback to eLearning. Your task is to simulate a real situation that will reflect a specific practical problem or a headache in the life of your students. The task of the students is to analyze the situation and work out, independently or during the collective discussion, the solution of the set task. It is important that at the same time they use the practical skills that were obtained during the course study. For example, if this is a corporate training course, make sure that employees recognize themselves in conditions that mimic their real work environment, their real interactions with colleagues or clients. And jointly find working solutions that they can apply in future work. Finally, we should not forget that this is a very simple, but very effective way to give a constructive link. Increasing the interest of students of the course, focusing on the winners, and not allowing them to give up when they fail. Instead of saying: "This is the right answer," say: "Well done!", "Keep it up!", "Great job!" If the student coped with the task. Use the phrase "Hold on, next time it works out!", "I know you can do it!", "Don't give up!" Words have power. They cannot change reality, but they can change the way people perceive this reality. This relationship is truly inspirational and motivating.

The success of conversations depends largely on the correctness of the questions. The questions are set by the teacher in advance so that all students prepare to answer. The questions should be short, clear, meaningful, formulated so that the student is forced to think.

Aquarium technique is a discussion of the material, the content of which is connected with contradictory approaches, conflicts, and disagreements. It focuses on the

process of presenting the point of view, its argumentation. The group is divided into subgroups, each is selected by a representative who introduces the position of the group to the rest of the audience. After discussing the problems in groups, representatives gather at the blackboard, express and try to defend the position of their group. In addition to the representatives, no one has the right to order, but members of groups are allowed to send instructions to their representatives in notes. Both representatives and groups can ask for a "time out" for consultation. The "aquarium" discussion of the problem between the representatives of the groups ends either after the predetermined time has elapsed or after reaching a solution. Then it is critically reviewed by the entire audience. This form of discussion is interesting because there are only five or six speakers in the field of attention of students, which allows focussing on the main positions.

The strategy of cooperation involves the development of relations of trust, mutual assistance, the mutual responsibility of students and teachers, as well as the development of respect and confidence in the student's personality, with the provision of opportunities for self-determination, initiative and individual responsibility for the result. Students may think that everything is OK and that there are no areas for improvement. Learners value feedback, especially when it is given by someone credible whom they respect as a role model or for their knowledge, attitudes or clinical competence. Failing to give feedback sends a non-verbal communication in itself and can lead to mixed messages, and false assessment of the learner of their abilities, as well as a lack of trust in the teacher or clinician.

Each of the strategies works effectively with the teacher's assistance at the prior stages and can be implemented as both written and oral performance.

When considering the impact of peer feedback on language learning, the following perspectives can be distinguished:
1) It provides top-quality information about students' performance;
2) It helps to understand what good performance is;
3) It encourages the development of reflection in learning;
4) It facilitates positive self-esteem;
5) It clarifies expected standards;
6) It helps the students articulate what changes they need to make to improve their performance and better self-assess themselves, thus, becoming the element of self-regulated learning.

To facilitate effective peer feedback it is important to consider the classroom culture and changes that are needed for the students to feel safe and comfortable while giving and receiving feedback from their peers. Sackstein (2017) argued that "by creating classroom cultures that embody these qualities, educators can develop confident risk-takers who are interested in innovation and in developing their minds in ways that work for them"(ch.1). Once students are at ease with making their observations public, we could create conditions under which social learning might be facilitated. That is the reason why the concept of conducive classroom and effective peer feedback seems to be a perspective issue for further research.

The student evaluates the work of another student by referring to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Peer assessment allows: to provide feedback to the student;   engage the student in the evaluation process. Peer review takes place throughout the learning process. According to Anne Davies (2003), "The more

descriptive and specific feedback students receive during their learning, the more they can learn." The teacher invites the student to look critically at the work of one or more peers by referring to the learning outcomes and evaluation criteria. It is by taking into account the evaluation criteria that the student can highlight the strengths and areas for improvement of a job, and then comment on the next steps to take.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

To sum up, we may suggest the following principles that generally allow optimizing communication in a feedback process.

1) Focusing feedback on behaviors, tasks or events, rather than the person. The description of behaviors, which are aspects that can be improved, focuses on what is happening. This approach, which is neither evaluative nor selective, can help the individual to change if he wants to. In contrast, personal criticism is always difficult to accept and the risk is high that it may generate conflict.

2) Focus feedback on observation rather than inference. Observation, if it is concrete, nuanced and realistic, can be shared with others, whereas inference, which usually results from personal interpretation or belief, confuses communication and may be misleading.

3) Focus feedback on a description rather than judgment. It is best to stay as neutral as possible and avoid bias, by describing rather than judging, and focusing on the "what" rather than the "why". We must focus on sharing ideas and information rather than on the advice that would prevent the other from learning to find the solution or make their own choices.

4) Take responsibility for feedback and results. Expressing yourself in the first person clearly establishes the origin of the words. On the one hand, if we really want to help, we must also avoid being directive and do not hesitate to ask the other to clarify what is not clear to facilitate understanding. On the other hand, the receiver of the feedback must avoid the defensive attitude, think about what he will do and say that finally, even if it is not always pleasant to hear, without it, there will be little or no improvement.

5) Anticipate the effect of feedback on the person receiving it. Feedback is usually more useful if it is timely and sought rather than imposed and if it occurs in a context of support and accompaniment. One must always consider the person to whom they are addressing by demonstrating respect and empathy, and ensure that the breadth of comments does not exceed their ability to receive them. Feedback when using an inappropriate tone can generate very strong emotional responses.

Other more specific recommendations compiled from various research to maximize the effectiveness of formative feedback in a learning context and that can be used by peer learners include: focusing feedback on work learner and its connection to the task and making suggestions for improvement, elaborating feedback that describes the "what", "how" and / or "why" of a problem. This cognitive feedback is usually more effective than simply checking the results. Also providing feedback in an assimilable amount, failing which the result could be superficial learning or cognitive overload, providing clear and specific feedback and, where possible, link goals and performance to avoid frustrating the learner and impeding learning. Ask students to provide as simple feedback as possible, ensuring that it is appropriate at the cognitive level and the needs of the individual to reduce uncertainty in performance by clarifying objectives and

possible gaps. Make them formulate honest, objective and credible feedback content that will be considered useful and taken seriously. Feedback has to emphasize learning rather than performance, emphasizing the need for effort and error to improve learning and performance. It is necessary to avoid normative comparisons with others, comments that may discourage the individual or threaten one's self-esteem. If you have to make a negative comment, be sure to always come up with a solution, a positive alternative and use compliments in a reasonable dose and justify them. Too much praise frees the attention of the individual towards himself, which distracts from learning.

Thus, at present, scientists, educators and psychologists have developed and continue to develop various types and methods of feedback. The techniques proposed above should be widely applied in the learning process, since it contributes to the intensification of cognitive activity and the formation of motivation among the trainees and, accordingly, to better assimilation of knowledge and the development of skills. Also, the use of the presented methods of receiving feedback in their activities will be useful for young teachers, since at the initial stage of their work they need to know the attitude of students to the subject as a whole, to various types of tasks. In addition, it helps to learn to adjust the learning content, ways of presenting information, students' actions and the emotional background of the lessons.

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