STUDENT APPROACHES TO PEER EDITING IN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

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Contents

Peer editing / review / feedback

A learning situation, where a student gives comments on other students' written work and where the texts are discussed

Peer review in language learning

Students reconstruct their knowledge about language and discuss language-related questions (Swain et al. 2002)

Alternative approaches, new ideas and responses to challenges (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006, Sadler 2010)

Peer review in language learning

A part of a dialogic process of learning whereby a student is socialized into becoming a member of an academic community (Sadler 2010, Orsmond et al. 2013, Virtanen et al. 2015)

Stronger self-regulation skills (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006, Orsmond et al. 2013)

Peer review in language learning

Improves metacognitive skills (Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2009, Virtanen et al. 2015)

Improves cooperation skills and sense of community (Sadler 2010)

Part of life-long learning and skills for work (Virtanen et al. 2015, Sadler 2010)

Peer review in language learning

- Increased commitment

- Increased motivation

- Sharing, reworking, reflection

- Agency & ownership

- Open assessment culture

The study

- University students, N = 149

- **Finnish as the first language** (N=61)

- **English** (N=42 at CEFR **B2** and **C1**)

- **French** (N=46 at CEFR **A1**)

- Students' opinions and experiences
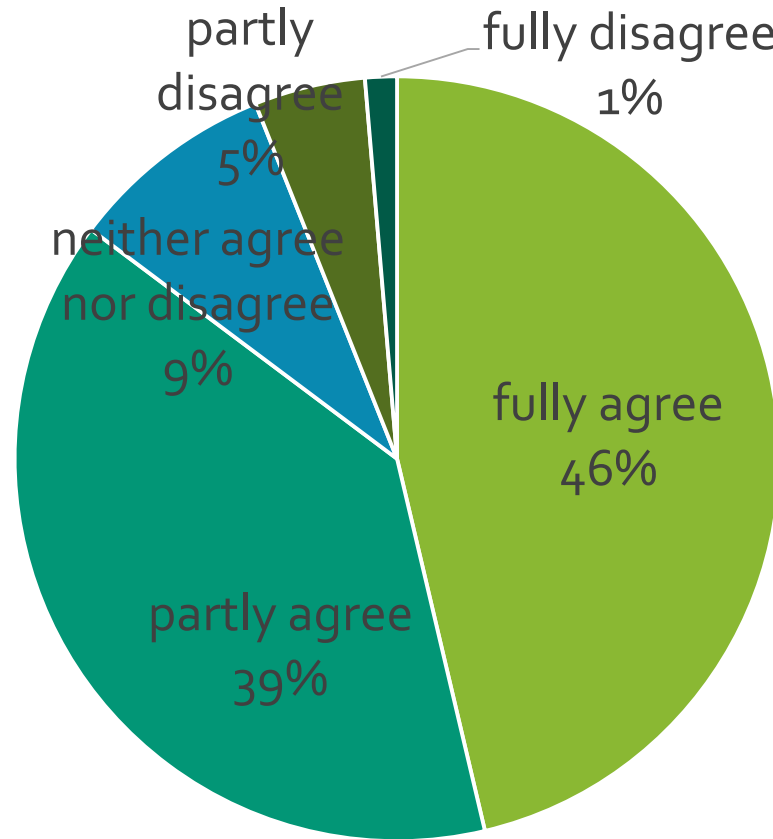
- Data-driven content analysis

Results

- ❖ Benefits
- ❖ Challenges
- ❖ Peer vs. teacher feedback
- ❖ Implications

BENEFITS

Peer editing helped me to work on my own text (N=149)

- fully agree 46%
- partly agree 39%
- neither agree nor disagree 9%
- partly disagree 5%
- fully disagree 1%

# Benefits – native and advanced

- Focus on the text / writing

- Help for editing and improving the text

    "I think I can now formulate better paragraphs, got some good ideas on how to maintain flow in the text and the use of references is clearer now"

- Noticing mistakes and correcting them

    "When editing my text, it was easier to pay attention to problematic spots once they had been highlighted to me"

Benefits – native and advanced
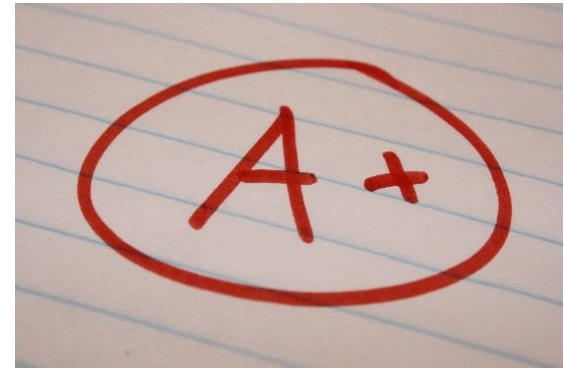
- Reading other people's texts and giving comments

    "I learned more when I went through other people's texts as well, not just my own"

- Perhaps easier to accept peer feedback (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006)

Benefits - beginners

- Focus on the language / learning

- Reflective comparison to others

    "You could compare your skills level to the others"

- Discussion with others

    "I was reminded of several grammar rules in the joint discussion. The way of working resembled problem-based learning and helped me form a holistic picture of the challenges posed when writing in French"
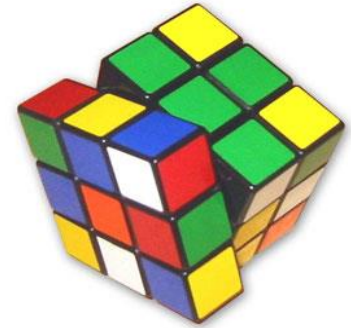
- Giving perhaps more useful than receiving at the beginners' level (Lundstrom & Baker 2009)

CHALLENGES

Challenges in peer feedback

- Finding mistakes and correcting them

- Limited skills in the language or content area

    "Your own skills might not be up to a level where you could see any room for improvement in anyone else's writing"

- Insecurity about one's own or the partners' skills

    "You wonder whether something truly needs to be fixed or whether it is just a matter of opinion"

➢ Inability to notice or to correct errors or "overcorrecting" them (O'Donnell 2014)

# Challenges in peer feedback
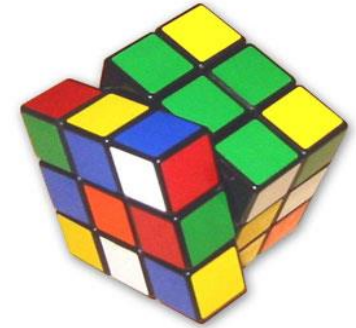
- Lack of any / good comments

    ”I did not get any ideas for improvement, although my text certainly could have been improved; they just said that it was a good text”

- Giving both positive and negative comments

    ”Positive feedback: how do I give positive feedback when there are lots of mistakes”

➤ Students might have insufficient skills in giving and receiving <u>concrete</u> and <u>useful</u> feedback (Min 2005)
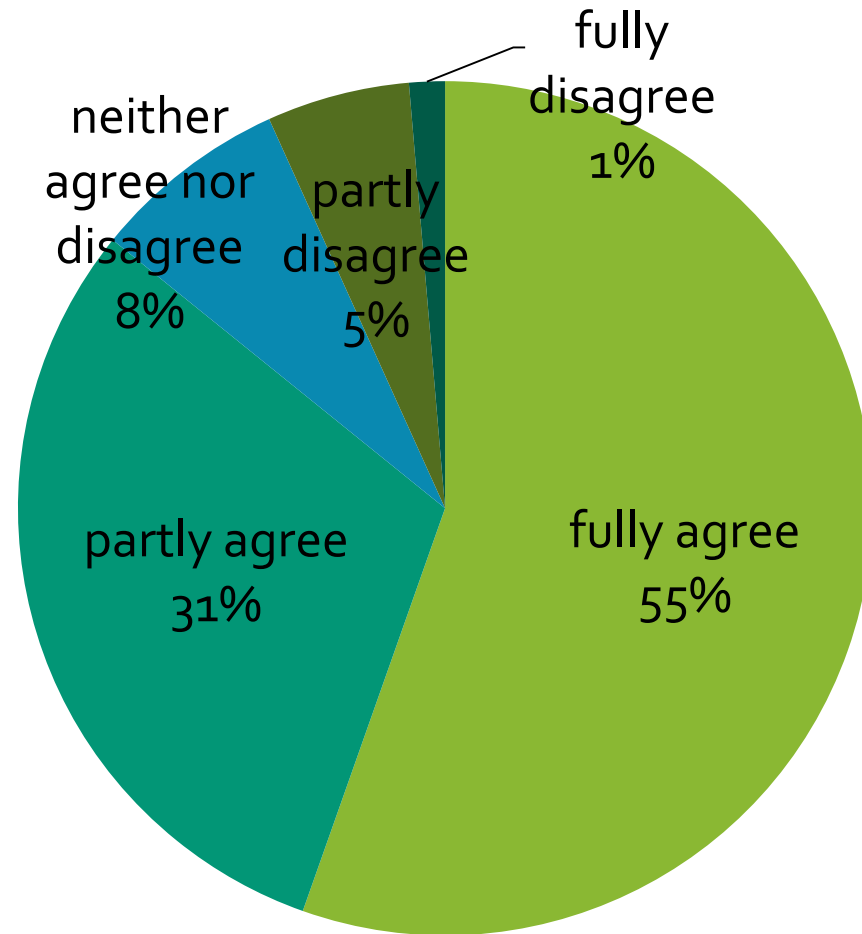
Challenges in peer feedback
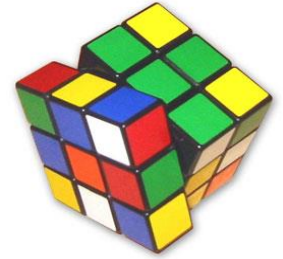
- Concern about the peer's reaction, anxiety

  "Giving criticism without sounding condescending"

  "Getting feedback on your own text makes you quite jittery"

- Difficulty in implementing the suggestions

➢ Students might be uncomfortable with peer review if their self-esteem is low or if their previous experiences have been negative (Weaver 2006).

PEER / TEACHER

Teacher feedback is always necessary (N=148)

fully disagree 1%

neither agree nor disagree 8%

partly disagree 5%

partly agree 31%

fully agree 55%

Peer / Teacher

- Both are needed

   "Both kinds of feedback are useful as long as the reader really makes an effort to give comments"

- First the peers, then the teacher

   "The peers gave good comments but did not notice everything, which is why teacher feedback is also needed"

- Complementary feedback

   "The peer focuses on readability, the teacher on errors in language use"

   "The teacher focused on the text as a whole, while the peers corrected mistakes in grammar"

Peer / teacher

- Peer feedback is more rewarding

  "Peer feedback is more genuine and practical, and it is easier to get"

  "Peer feedback focuses on giving ideas and suggestions, while feedback from the teacher is one-sided"

- The teacher is a professional, a language expert

  "The teacher has much more experience"

- Doubts about (the quality of) peer feedback

  "Peer feedback is not the truth, it only prepares you for the comments coming from the teacher"

➢ Reflection of a traditional assessment culture: Only the teacher gives feedback? (O'Donnell 2014)

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Pedagogical implications

- A natural part of academic culture

- Support to insecure students

- Jointly constructed instructions

- Problem-solving approach

Pedagogical implications

- Practice and time

- Groups, not pairs

- Focus on the process and dialogue

- Focus on communication, not on errors

- The peer is a critical reader (O'Donnell 2014)

Conclusions

- Taking initiative, ownership, active learning

- Learning to appreciate feedback

➢ Students gain more from feedback if their ability to give and receive feedback is supported (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006)

Conclusions

- Benefits fairly universal, challenges individual

- Suitable at all levels of language learning

- Teacher feedback: expert opinion

- Peer feedback: exchange of ideas, new perspectives

Thank you!

Sources

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