The Impact of Peer-tutoring in a University Language Classroom

by

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- Increased emphasis on the importance of Teaching and Learning in Hong Kong Universities
- UGC funding to establish Communities of Practice (COP) in universities
- The formation of a COP aiming to evaluate HKBU students’ attainment of the 7 graduate attributes through Problem-based and Service Learning
- Hong Kong Baptist University’s emphasis on Whole Person Education (Vision 2020)
University English I and University English II (general English courses)

Target students: Cantonese and Putonghua speaking Year 1 students

Peer tutoring is used as a pedagogical approach to consolidate the grammar knowledge of these adult learners of English

Rationale: Students are of different levels of proficiency and are NOT new learners of English
Session Objectives

1. Introduce the incorporation of peer tutoring in a Hong Kong university language classroom among second language learners of English.
2. Report students’ perception of the impact of peer tutoring on their attainment of written communication, oral communication skills and team work.
3. Discuss key factors contributing to successful implementation of peer tutoring to increase learning effectiveness.
Peer learning in the form of cooperative learning and peer tutoring has been increasingly adopted as a strategy to enhance learning.

Research evidence shows that significant achievement can be yielded if it is implemented carefully, considering the form of organization in relation to the target purpose, context, and population (Topping, 2005; Arrand, 2014).

In recent years, peer tutoring in higher education has also gained more attention and there has been considerable interest among practitioners in evaluating the effectiveness of this pedagogy in the university context (Clarkson & Luca, 2002; Colvin, 2007; Chen & Liu, 2010).
Methodology (1)

* **Period of study:**
  * Fall Semester, 2014-2015 - GCLA1008 University English I
  * Spring Semester, 2014-2015 – GCLA1009 University English II

* **Problem-based learning:**
  * Students required to form groups to act as peer tutors to teach particular aspects of grammar knowledge in the syllabus to their fellow classmates in class (with exercises included).
  * Students, therefore, took turns in different times of the semester serving as peer tutors and changed roles as the semester progressed.
Some of the grammar topics covered:
- Articles and Modal verbs
- Perfect tenses and the Modal Perfect
- Cohesion
- Nominalisation
- Subordinate clauses
- Verb complementation
- Conditionals
Methodology (3)

- **COLLECTION OF STUDENTS’ FEEDBACK**
  - Surveys and focus group interviews.
  - 3rd week of the Semester & End of semester.
  - Students’ Self Evaluation of their current attainment of the 7 graduate attributes (Pre and Post activity, Rating 1-10).
  - 2 Focus Group Interviews conducted in late January and late April with 2 groups of students (5 in January and 7 in April = about 12% of all students in the courses).
Sample students’ work
Past Perfect

Form:
Had + past participle

Use of past perfect:
* Looks back from a time in the past to another time before that

Example:
* She’d applied for ten jobs before she got this one.
Example:
I had never seen Angela until I attended her class.
Future Perfect

Form:
Will have + past participle

Use of future perfect:
* Something will be finished or completed by a certain time in the future

Examples:
* Lucas will have finished the job by 6.00p.m. tomorrow.
Example:
We will have finished the project by Monday.
Future perfect continuous

* - An ongoing action or situation expected in the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Perfect Continuous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(will) + (have) + (been) + (present participle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(am / is / are) + (going to) + (have) + (been) + (present participle)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past  Present  Future
*e.g. He will have been swimming for 3 hours.
(He is likely to swim for 3 hours in the future.)

*e.g. They will have been travelling for months in the next summer.
(They are probably going to travel for months in the next summer.)
Verb-complementation: Verb + to-infinitive

What is an infinitive?
Ans: a verb with the word ”to” in front of it.
- to be
- to dream
- to hold
- to sleep
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs followed by the to-infinitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>appear</td>
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<td>arrange</td>
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<td>ask</td>
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<tr>
<td>attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
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<tr>
<td>be dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beg</td>
</tr>
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<td>begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part B: Conditionals

In the following sentences, fill in the blanks with verbs of suitable tenses:

1. I **could stop** (can, stop) working if I **won** (win) the lottery.

2. What **would** (will) you do if it **were** (be) to rain later?

3. After my graduation, I have kept thinking:
   If I **had studied** (study) a little more in college, life **would have been** (will, be) easier.

4. If he **had gone** (go) to university, he **might be** (may, be) happier.

5. If we **had gotten** (get) to the airport on time, we **would have caught** (will, catch) our flight.
Subordinate Clauses

Video Clip
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNT1D0JoFk8
Types

• Relative
  Example: Jacky is a Hong Kong citizen who speaks fluent Japanese.

• Subordinate clause

• Reason
  Example: Tony woke up early just because he has classes today.
Types

- Showing condition
  Example: If you are going to London,
  don’t forget to visit the Tower Bridge.

- Showing result
  Example: HKTV was unable to grant a TV license,
  so they are using the Internet to broadcast their programmes.
Conjunctions and Linking Adverbs

How many linkers can you find in this song?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra-Om7UMSJc
I will not make the same mistakes that you did
I will not let myself
Cause my heart so much misery
I will not break the way you did,
You fell so hard
I've learned the hard way
To never let it get that far

Because of you
I never stray too far from the sidewalk
Because of you
I learned to play on the safe side so I don't get hurt
Because of you
I find it hard to trust not only me, but everyone around me
Because of you
I am afraid

I lose my way
And it's not too long before you point it out
I cannot cry
Because I know that's weakness in your eyes
I'm forced to fake
A smile, a laugh everyday of my life
My heart can't possibly break
When it wasn't even whole to start with

Because of you
I never stray too far from the sidewalk
Because of you
I learned to play on the safe side so I don't get hurt
Because of you
I don't know how to let anyone else in
Because of you
I'm ashamed of my life because it's empty
Because of you
I am afraid

Because of you
Because of you
Functions of Cohesion devices

- Linking words and phrases to connect ideas and to show the relationships between paragraphs, sentences, or part of sentences
- Introducing Ideas
- Adding Similar Ideas
- Contrasting Ideas
- Giving Examples or Evidence
- Explaining Results
- Sequencing
- Providing Explanations
- Sharing Experience
- Drawing Conclusions
- Introducing Your Opinions
Modal Perfect

Modal Perfect Video Clip:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK66zaOtK0&noredirect=1
1. Use must/ can't/ couldn't have+ past participle to express certainty about something in the past.

* e.g. He must have paid his bill- I've got all the money
* e.g. She can't have arrived- her coat isn't here.
* e.g. Marcel couldn't have written- his English isn't good enough.

* ! ! !The opposite of “must have done” is can't/couldn't have done.

It expresses impossibility! ! ! WATCH OUT!
Nominalisation (015-200)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNlkHtMgcPQ
**COLLECTION OF STUDENTS’ FEEDBACK**

* Surveys and focus group interviews.
* 3rd week of the Semester & End of semester.
* Students’ Self Evaluation of their current attainment of the 7 graduate attributes (Pre and Post activity, Rating 1-10).
* 2 Focus Group Interviews conducted in late January and late April with 2 groups of students (5 in January and 7 in April = about 12% of all students in the courses).
## Results
### Students’ perception of their attainment of the graduate attributes of HKBU (Fall)

**Jan 2015 GCLA1009 - University English II (n=56)**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Mean – pre-test</th>
<th>Mean – post-test</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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# Results (2)

Students’ perception of their attainment of the graduate attributes of HKBU (Spring)

- April 2015 GCLA1009 University English I (n=29)
- T-test

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<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Mean – pre-test</th>
<th>Mean – post-test</th>
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<th>p-value</th>
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<td>Knowledge</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary Knowledge</td>
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<td>7.48</td>
<td>-1.955</td>
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Written Communication</td>
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<td>0.229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>7.72</td>
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<td>Health Awareness</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>-1.480</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Students are in general quite positive about the experience and have shown gains in their perception of their own ability in disciplinary knowledge, oral and written communication skills and teamwork skills.

It is also found that students think they benefit more being ‘teachers’ than being ‘students’, which echoed to some extent with the findings of Topping (2005) and Colvin (2007) and Arrand (2014).

High-achievers found the exercise more helpful than low achievers.
“ I think I am more familiar with the grammar topic as I needed to research on the topic before we present. There are things which I had never clarified before and because I had to teach others I needed to make sure that I was clear.”

“ I have surely increased my grammar knowledge. When we made mistakes, the teacher let us know before the presentation. We were asked to make changes and after the presentation, we needed to make further changes before we sent our ppt. to our classmates.”
“Some classmates are not good at expressing themselves. They are not clear about the grammar points and we get confused too. It’s better for the teacher to clarify our misunderstandings.”

“I would rather have my teacher teach me. My classmates don’t seem to know the grammar points themselves.”
“I definitely improved my oral skills as we just had the ppts and had to improvise and speak spontaneously. It was hard and it forced us to express ourselves clearly.”

(7 out 12)

“As the teaching doesn’t count much towards our grade... I think just about 5%, we did not write a script. We were also interested in trying new ways to teach our students.... We know what they are interested in and so we try to find more interesting ways to teach them so it’s less boring.”
“We work in a small teams. We have to know who to assign certain tasks. Some of us are better in grammar so we do the introduction. E is responsible for the exercises because she has problem with grammar.”

“We are not from the same majors and so we need to compromise... meeting times, tasks etc.....”
Factors leading to successful implementation of peer tutoring

- Clear instructions
- Teacher’s input (before, during and after the presentation)
- Intrinsic motivation (the weighting should not be too high)
- Establishing a supportive environment
References


Q & A Session
Thank You