

A Study of Peer Review in English Writing from the Perspective of Interpersonal Function

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Abstract: In view of the problem that the sentence evaluation mechanism of correctionnet focuses on grammar and vocabulary modification, this paper, based on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction theory framework, sets up a peer assessment scale from three aspects: modal verbs, modal adjuncts and evidentiality. Taking English majors in provincial universities as the test subjects, this paper makes a comparative analysis of their interpersonal functional language representation data before and after training. The results of the study verified the applicability and popularization of the scale, and complied with the demand of combining online and offline teaching methods to improve learners' English writing ability in the data age.

1. Research background and raising of problems

Peer assessment/peer feedback refers to that peers give constructive feedback, praise or guidance according to a set of standards provided by teachers to help improve your articles. The change of the concept of "student-centered" in classroom teaching, the change of the focus of "process teaching method" in writing teaching, and the change of the role of teachers to "non-authority" and "facilitator" have made peer assessment since the introduction of second language writing teaching (Elbow, 1973) in the 1970s, which aroused the interest of native English researchers, arouse students' enthusiasm for learning. Because of its initiative and criticality, it is still a research hotspot in second language writing at home and abroad. On the one hand, the study of peer assessment involves the psychological, cognitive, emotional, social and cultural factors of teachers and students; on the other hand, it involves the setting of texts and evaluation criteria. This paper aims to address the problems that students have reflected in online composition correction on www.pigai.org, and to set evaluation criteria at the discourse level that can help offline students to evaluate themselves and each other, with a view to improving students' writing ability as a whole.[1]

2. Theoretical Basis

The core components of the former Soviet psychologist Vygotsky's "cultural and historical development theory", namely, Zone of Proximal Development, Activity Theory and Mediation, provide the relevant theoretical basis for the research on the evaluation mechanism of this study.

2.1. Concept of the nearest development zone

Vygotsky (1978) put forward the concept of "zone of proximal development" when summarizing children's learning and development problems, which specifically refers to the gap between children's actual development level and potential development level. In the context of second language writing teaching, it can be understood that the actual level of second language learners' writing is based on their ability to solve problems independently, emphasizing personal efforts; The potential development level of second language writers refers to the ability of learners to solve problems under the guidance of teachers or in the cooperation of peers with strong abilities. It emphasizes the dominant position of teachers in teaching and the role of peer assisted learning in promoting individual psychological development and learning potential.[2]

2.2. Activity theory of learning

The activity theory of Vygotsky's "socio-cultural theory" was developed into an independent learning activity theory by its student Leontiev (1978). The three levels of human behavior include the activity level driven by physiological and social needs, the action level oriented by goals, and the action level that automatically responds to the current social material conditions. In the context of second language writing teaching, specific writing tasks are used to induce learners' behavioral motivation. Clear and systematic evaluation criteria set by teachers define the direction of the goal oriented peer assessment fabric. Students implement and complete the set goals through specific actions of self-testing and mutual evaluation, so as to constantly improve and develop individual psychology and shape critical thinking ability.

2.3. Halliday's three language functions

According to social and cultural theory, in the abstract symbolic world, language is a psychological tool for intermediary transformation. The interactive communication plays the role of a medium, which can stimulate people's autonomy and rational thinking, and provides a good rationale for the study of the evaluation criteria set at the text level in this paper. Halliday (Thompson, 2008), a social functional linguist, summed up three basic functions of language: ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and textual metafunction, which correspond one by one with the transitivity, mood and theme systems of language, and can realize abstract social functions in specific linguistic representations. Based on this, this paper intends to make up for the previous lack of research on setting evaluation standards from the perspective of social functions. 3. Mixed teaching research design

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3.1. Research object

The research object of this paper is 120 students from three classes of English major in a provincial college in the first half of the third year. They have been enrolled with a score of two and have received systematic training in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The rate of passing the fourth grade is nearly 50%.

3.2. Research methods

This paper mainly adopts the method of discourse analysis and the combination of online

individual and offline peer evaluation. The specific steps are as follows:

3.2.1. Quku corrects online composition task settings

This research will set up two argumentative writing tasks, one is completed before the peer evaluation standard training, and the other is after the systematic evaluation training to compare and analyze the differences before and after the training to verify the applicability of the evaluation standard. This research makes use of the advantages of timely feedback of sentence by sentence comments on the correction website, and encourages students to use the online platform evaluation system to constantly improve their own articles and maximize their personal efforts by recording the last highest score into their scores.[3]

3.2.2. The setting of peer evaluation criteria from the perspective of interpersonal function

Commenting by sentence, the website can make relevant suggestions on the expansion of basic grammar and word meaning, such as the consistency of subject and predicate, the singular and plural number of words, the subject object case, gerund form, and the integrity of sentence patterns, as well as the primary and explicit cohesion of the text. However, it cannot distinguish whether the content is consistent with the theme, whether different genre texts have high-level implicit cohesion and interpersonal functional language representation, so it cannot put forward relevant suggestions for improvement. In view of this, based on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction (Thompson, 2008:66) and the evidentiality of Aikhenvald (2004), this study sets the evaluation criteria as follows in table 1:

Table 1: Peer rating scale from the perspective of interpersonal metafunction

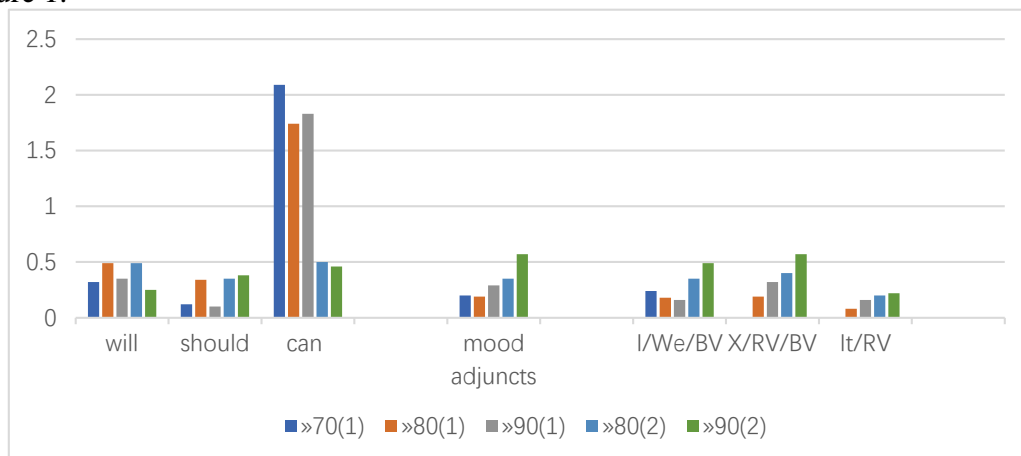
Linguistic representation of interpersonal metafunction	Subjectivity (decreasing) → Objectivity (increasing)									
Modal verbs	must/ought to	need/have to	will	would	should	can	could	may	might	
Modal adjuncts	Subjectivity probably, possibly, certainly, perhaps, maybe...									
Mood adjuncts	! strongly, especially, absolutely, exceptionally...									
Modal clauses	Objectivity It is likely that...; It is possible that...; It is essential that...; It seems/appears that...									
Evidentials	Subjectivity I/We verbs expressing belief like/believe/suppose/suggest/agree ! Objectivity(implicit) X /Author/Authority reporting verbs like argue/claim/maintain Objectivity (explicit) It is /has been argued/maintained/revealed/indicated... It is said that...; It is acknowledged that...; It is well known that...									

Whether the views expressed by the author in an argumentative paper are accepted by the readers depends on the objectivity of the argument. The language that avoids subjectivity is mainly reflected in the use of modal words. Modal verbs and modal adverbs between yes and no levels express the possibility of the views, and the negotiation between the author and the readers. In addition to the explicit modality expression, the reporting verbs in evidentiality can also reflect the objectivity and acceptability of the ideas in the text. [4]

3.2.3. Research findings

The argumentative writing task "Advantages and Disadvantages of Mobile Phone" assigned to the research object before the training in this study. At the end of the period, the argumentative writing

task assigned after the training should first summarize the main idea of the article, that is, "Modern Women Challenge Traditional Roles", and then state their own views and make relevant arguments. The research results show that the use rate and diversity of interpersonal metafunctional language representation of the research objects have been significantly improved after the training, as shown in the figure 1.



(Figure 1 Control table of interpersonal meta-function characterization)

Figure 1: Comparison of the frequency of interpersonal metafunction representation

In order to show the difference of interpersonal representation used by testers with different English proficiency and those before and after training, this paper randomly selected 10 samples of pre training testers (group 1) and post training testers (group 2) according to the three grades of 70-79, 80-89, 90-99, and statistically analyzed the frequency of use of each 100 words. The research found that the scores of the same tester's final essay were all above 80 points, which to some extent affirmed the improvement of the overall writing level with the help of offline training and online self-test correction mechanism.[5]

The histogram in Figure 1 is divided into three parts: modal verbs, mood adjuncts, and evidential representations. The comparison chart of the use frequency of modal verbs shows that learners use the median modal verb "can" more frequently at the initial stage, reaching 2.09%, while the use rate of learners after training has significantly decreased, not more than 0.5%. Secondly, "will" and "should" are used more frequently. There is not much difference in the use of the willing modal verb "will" before and after the training. However, the frequency of the trained learners using the modal verb "should" to express obligations is nearly three times higher than the former. Typical examples of students' exercises are as follows:

Example 1: They believe that the negative information on website can contaminate the mind of the public. Internet buzzwords, for example, can mislead the meanings of words so that we can't learn the standard language correctly. (more than 70 points for one group)

Example 2: I believe the phone will bring us more convenience in the future. (More than 80 points for one group)

Example 3: What women should do is to try to change the backward concepts instead of doing nothing. Women's life should also be brilliant.(More than 90 points for two groups)

Modal adjuncts are not counted because they are used sporadically, while modal adjuncts are used more frequently by the tester, and their frequency of use and vocabulary diversification are in direct proportion to the tester's English proficiency. For example:

Example 4: Generally speaking, nevertheless, if people can use their mobile phones correctly, the advantages of using mobile phones far outweigh the disadvantages. (More than 90 points for one group)

Example 5: This is especially true for women. For this reason, I feel deeply unfair and disagree with the notion that women cannot develop. (More than 90 points for two groups)

In the aspect of evidential representation, as shown in the figure, low score testers before training tend to use highly subjective evidential representations of "first person+belief verb", such as "I believe" in example 2, while after training, testers tend to use objective evidential representations of "third person+reporting verb" and "demonstrative pronoun+reporting verb". Examples are as follows:

Example 6: According to the excerpt, the author states that the women are difficult to have position in society, even though they are ambitious. In the earlier society, the men are sniffed at and scoffed at the equality between male and female, and psychologists also agree that it is human nature to want to fit in, while the peer-group pressure on a young woman in her 20s is much more than on a man. (More than 80 points for two groups)

Example 7: It is universally acknowledged that women are considered weaker than men in many countries because of their different physical and mental structures. (More than 90 points for two groups)

The results show that the researchers have greatly improved their use of interpersonal function representation and vocabulary diversity.

4. Conclusion

The research results show that there is still room for improvement in the following aspects:

First, the number of research corpus is relatively small, which makes some linguistic representations unobvious. The high frequency of high value expressions in modal verbs reflects to some extent the tester's weak interpersonal awareness when writing. On the other hand, due to the small amount of corpus, low value modal verbs with strong objectivity, such as "could" and "might", cannot be shown in the figure, and learners' negotiation awareness needs to be strengthened.

Second, the setting of interpersonal language representation of the rating scale is not detailed enough, and there is room for improvement in genre and diversity of representation. The obvious differences in evidentiality, on the one hand, reflect the positive effects of the scale, and on the other hand, are affected by the needs of propositional writing for induction and comment on different genres. The whole sentence evaluation adjuncts such as "generally speaking", "first/third person+belief verb" and "first person+reporting verb" in the corpus increase the difficulty of statistics and analysis of the corpus.

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