А.В. Исаева

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## ВЗАИМООЦЕНКА КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ КОНТРОЛЯ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОЙ РАБО-ТЫ СТУДЕНТОВ

## PEER ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL FOR STUDENT SELF-STUDY CONTROL

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются такие формы контроля самостоятельной работы студентов, как взаимопроверка и взаимооценка. Проводится анализ основных проблем, связанных с их применением, и возможностей их предотвращения. Указанные виды контроля описываются с точки зрения выполнения ими его основных функций, тесно связанных с процессом организации самостоятельной работы. Статья раскрывает их мотивационный потенциал для активной познавательной деятельности студентов.

**Abstract.** The article considers such types of student self-study control as peer assessment and peer editing. It gives the analysis of the main problems connected with their usage and the possibilities to prevent them. The identified types are described in terms of their performing the basic functions of control that is closely related to the student self-study management. The paper reveals their motivational capability for students' active learning.

**Ключевые слова:** самостоятельная работа, формы контроля, взаимооценка, взаимопроверка, функции контроля, обучение иностранному языку.

**Keywords:** self-study, types of control, peer assessment, peer editing, functions of control, a foreign language teaching.

The attitude to teaching a foreign language has recently gone through significant changes due to the development of higher education system. The necessity to form the ability to self-study and new demands that the modern society places on a specialist have a great influence on the learning process. From this viewpoint the student self-study becomes the important part of the learning experience.

In a broad sense, the student self-study is the kind of activity that is carried out within the educational process under the guidance and control of a teacher. The student self-study management requires involving a large amount of different resources both on the part of a teacher, and a student.

The important factors of a successful self-study are its continuity, step-by-step increase in difficulty, promoting the motivation of students, understanding the main point of self-study, creativity and the choice of rational forms of its organization and control [1].

Control is the basic requirement of implementing self-study and therefore should be conducted at all the stages of learning. The role of control in teaching and learning is impossible to overestimate. The clear system of controlling activities provides the rational academic management,

helps to reveal strengths and weaknesses of every student and offers a teacher an opportunity to plan the learning process more effectively.

According to the stage of the learning process several forms of control should be distinguished, such as preliminary (preparatory), current, periodic and final.

A preliminary (preparatory) control is a diagnostic means of the initial level of a student's foreign language proficiency, his/her personal characteristics and understanding of the learning objectives, which have a great significance for mastering a foreign language. Basing on this information the teacher can tailor the plan so that it would cover all the issues requiring a specific attention.

A current control measures the students' progress in acquisition of the required skills and allows the teacher to conclude if the students work systematically and responsibly. It helps to regularly administrate the students' academic activity and correct it, if necessary.

A periodic control provides the teacher with the information of the students' skills related to a particular topic. Due to this form of control the material can be generalized and systematized and the logical connections between different sections can be defined.

A final control has the purpose of checking the general achievements in acquiring different skills, prescribed by the educational program.

In order to increase the effectiveness of control within different stages it is necessary to meet the following requirements to its organization:

5. purposefulness, regularity and systematic nature,
6. objectiveness,
7. comprehensibility of monitoring all the sections, tasks, significant components of the educational process,
8. individual character,
9. the possibility to save time in order to increase the effectiveness,
10. openness,
11. reasonableness and motivation,
12. diversity of forms and methods of control, that provides the increase in students' interest to its realization and results [2].

Modern requirements to learning a foreign language within the context of higher education are based not only on the principles of transmitting knowledge from a teacher to a student, but on teaching them the techniques of self-control and self-study. The adoption of new standards of learning, the opportunity of a learner to become an active participant of the educational process showed the necessity not only to obtain knowledge on a subject but to acquire skills to put this knowledge

78

into use. The large amount of classroom and extracurricular activity of a student must be carried out independently.

According to D. Spiller, "the higher education literature testifies to an extensive interest in peer assessment which is driven by changing conceptions of teaching and learning. Contemporary approaches emphasize the active engagement of students in their own learning, learner responsibility, metacognitive skills and a dialogical, collaborative model of teaching and learning. Assessment processes in which the teacher holds all the power and makes all the choices limit the potential for learner development in all of these aspects" [3, 2]. It is necessary to consider the importance of inviting the students to share more fundamentally in the assessment process. In this respect peer assessment can play an important role: "an active participation by students in assessment design, choices, criteria and making judgments is a more sustainable preparation for subsequent working life" [4].

Peer assessment and peer editing are specific forms of control, where a student is offered to check, provide a feedback and assess the work of another student or the whole group.

Before implementing peer editing and assessment as the forms of student self-study control, it is necessary for a teacher to define regulations and criteria for it. A teacher should make sure that "the criteria for any piece of peer assessment are clear and fully discussed with students. They need practice to gain confidence in peer assessment and to become more competent at it. The important point is establishing an environment of trust in the classroom" [3, 13]. It should be noted that issues concerning the importance of a precise definition of the criteria for assessment often become the subject for scientific discussion [5-10].

There are several ways of using peer assessment and editing in class. Among them there should be distinguished pair work, work in groups, individual work and testing.

Pair work allows to control learning of a material, therefore the peer assessment may be applied at every stage of the lesson, such as checking the home assignment, written works, introducing and working on a new topic and summarizing knowledge on several topics.

Work in groups involves sharing written or oral work by a group of students. Students engaged in commentary on the work of others can heighten their own capacity for judgment and making intellectual choices [3, 11]. During this form of self-study students monitor the activity of every participant of the group themselves and assign the tasks. They may also be offered to assess the work of all the participants in the group: "peer feedback can encourage collaborative learning through interchange about what constitutes good work. Students can help each other to make sense of the gaps in their learning and understanding and to get a more sophisticated grasp of the learning process" [11, 139].

Peer editing of written works demands to involve the sufficient amount of time, as at first students accomplish their own work and then check the work of a peer, which is then checked by a teacher himself. This method is rather time-consuming, and it should not be used very often, but it has the great potential. Writing of the work and checking the already written one are two different types of activities. Having the opportunity to check and assess the work of a peer, a student may get acquainted with the alternative variant of one and the same work, understand, what knowledge he lacks, and focus on correcting his own errors. In case the assessed work is much weaker than his own work, a student makes sure that he has the necessary knowledge that motivates him to further active learning. If the mistakes in the work of peers turn out to be common, a teacher may correct the plan of work in class and pay a specific attention to them.

Individual peer editing may be used in many different ways. For example, after completing the written work (dictation, reproduction, dictation-translation, translation) students exchange their papers and check the accomplished tasks of each other. The students may be offered not only to correct the mistakes, but also to give reasons for their correction as an additional task (if there are grammatical mistakes, the assessor should explain the grammar rule and terms of its usage). Such a method of work with students can bring interesting results. Not having noticed the mistake in their own work, they are able to find it quickly in the work of a peer. As a rule, students readily check the works of each other. They feel the trust on the behalf of a teacher and their own self-sufficiency. This type of a classroom activity gives a teacher the opportunity to check the ability of students to analyze the text and to test their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

One of the variants of peer assessment and editing may become a peer review of students' works. This type of activity also has a number of advantages. The peer review often becomes the extra stimulus for a qualitative accomplishment of the work, because the opinion of others is very important for students. Besides, the student understands that everyone is under the same conditions. Students receive a new view of their work and a new feedback. As a rule, in the process of editing the reviewer is given the opportunity to reconsider the learning material and see the alternative way to do the assignment using his peer's work as an example: "Student receiving feedback from their peers can get a wider range of ideas about their work to promote development and improvement" [3, 11].

On the contrary, implementing peer editing as control of students' testing doesn't take much time. After writing the test students are given the key, with the help of which they can check the works of each other. On the one hand, it allows the teacher to economy time for checking. On the other hand, if the necessity to explain the correction is included in the process of checking, this type of work may become a kind of analysis of a conscious accomplishment of such tasks (for example,

80

the assessor should not only find a mistake, but also suggest a rule, that can be used in search for the right answer).

Obviously, the organization of peer assessment and editing can cause certain difficulties, but the proper approach to it allows avoiding many of them. The most frequent problem is probably the lack of objectivity of assessment (usually in those cases, when a student is asked not only to check the self-study work of his peer, but also to evaluate it). Here we may face the under- or overestimation, which depends on the relations between students. To avoid it, it is necessary to define the criteria for assessment (for example, to suggest a table that shows the points, accomplishment or non-accomplishment of which directly defines the grade), change the participants in pairs (in pair work), explain the assessor that the grade should be justified or make the process of feedback and peer assessment anonymous with assessors randomly chosen. The necessity to evaluate the work may be left to a teacher, suggesting the students just to check the work of a peer and provide a feedback. Sometimes, when it, for example, concerns the written translation, such a variant is even more preferable. The very important point of peer assessment and editing of written works is the fact that the assessor himself also becomes the assessed as the quality of his correction will be evaluated by a teacher. Such type of work can bring the unexpected results. Students taking part in the assessment of their peers try a role of their teacher and start to treat the work of a teacher with more respect and try to do the tasks more accurately. Peer assessment can help students to understand the assessment process itself, take control over their own learning and assessment and become more independent learners as a result.

Another problem that may appear in the process of implementing this method is the inability of students to explain their corrections. But this point may be considered the advantage of peer assessment and editing, because thus both a teacher and a student become aware of the gaps in the knowledge and can fill them.

The implementing peer editing and assessment takes much time, but it is necessary to remember that though they are of an auxiliary character, they represent an important stage for preparing students for self-study. All skills acquired in the process of peer assessment will be useful for developing the skills of self-analysis and self-control. Peer assessment can help students acquire a range of transferable key skills such as self-reflection, time management, organizational and team skills which are highly valued in the workplace. It is linked to a reflective practice because it involves self-development and is an important skill for career development and management.

The role of peer assessment of the quality and effectiveness of students' self-study is rather significant. According to its purposes peer assessment can perform several interrelated functions:

- *diagnostic*: as well as other types of control, peer assessment and editing allow to define a student's current level of knowledge and skills.

- *corrective*. It can help to measure the level of required skills and make changes in methods and ways of teaching.

- as one of the methods of teaching a foreign language the peer assessment carries out a *learning* function.

- stimulating nature of peer assessment reflects its *assessing* function. This type of control has a large educational meaning, developing the skills of self-reliance and responsibility, contributing to the elaboration of such personal characteristics as honesty and discipline. Peer assessment and editing serve as a good school for developing self-control.

- *developmental* function of peer assessment consists in stimulating the development of a student's cognitive abilities and his personality on the whole. The necessity to decide the certain thinking tasks in the process of peer assessment becomes the factor that defines the effectiveness of implementing this method in class.

- *educational (*mostly *mentoring)* function of peer assessment has a great meaning. This kind of activity encourages students to continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills and affects the psychological peculiarities of every student.

The necessity of creating the conditions for high learning activity, self-sufficiency and responsibility of students justifies their involvement in the controlling activities – peer assessment and peer editing. It should be noticed that peer editing is the useful method of optimization of learning process in class. Despite the fact that this method cannot always be referred to the minimization of time for checking the works by a teacher himself, it has a positive influence on the development of students' analyzing skills and processing the information. Peer assessment significantly intensifies the activity of students and raises their interest in getting knowledge. In the process of peer assessment the individual characteristics of students and their relations within the group are revealed. This information helps a teacher to understand them better and structure the work in class so that to motivate them to active learning. The methods of peer assessment are helpful in achieving students' deep learning and understanding of the material.

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