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Supporting Japanese First-year Collegiates' Confidence and English Fluency through Tri-sectional, Multi-modal Formative Assessment



The classroom-based project presented in this talk included the development of clear and concise instructions, an analytic rubric as well as practice and testing materials to assess students' speaking abilities. The speaking tasks consisted of three parts: *reading aloud*, *describing a picture*, and *giving your opinion*. As an extension of an ongoing departmental project originally focusing on second-year pharmacy students, the researchers incorporated eleven first-year student groups from all departments. Six of the groups were offered the module face-to-face, while the other five groups received instruction, practice tasks, and feedback online.

According to Xiao & Yang (2019), English language teachers should give students appropriate guidance, which includes instructing them on learning strategies, activating their metacognition, and enhancing their self-efficacy. The aim of the current project was to improve students' confidence and production of logical arguments by implementing a formative speaking assessment module that provided them with op- portunities for advancement through succinct instruction, insight into strengths and weaknesses / self-evaluation, and instructor feedback. The research questions in- cluded: 1) To what extent does the use of the assessment tool improve first-year students' comprehensibility in English? 2) To what extent does classroom instruction help improve student confidence?

This study took a mixed-method approach where data from student grades and surveys were collected and analyzed. To obtain a baseline of students' speaking abilities prior to any formal instruction and gain insight into the assessment process, one class was chosen by each instructor and asked to record themselves describing a picture. A comparison of the baseline assessment and finals resulted in improvement following the introduction of rubrics and explicit instruction. The remaining two aspects also showed a distinct rise both in grades and comprehensibility between midterms and finals. The survey results showed that

across departments, students' confidence in their abilities to express themselves in English increased over the semester.

Keywords: Formative assessment, English fluency, classroom-based project

Biodata

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