

Peer Collaboration for Text Comprehension among Taiwanese University Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates how the Taiwanese university students collaboratively constructed meaning from the texts in an English classroom. The study is qualitative, classroom-based and examines the pattern of collaborative interaction of the EFL learners for 14 weeks. Based on the analysis of group discussions, five distinct patterns of peer collaboration emerged from the transcription data. It was found that the learners with relatively homogenous English ability provided collaborative scaffolding for text comprehension through co-construction, elaboration, appeal for assistance, corrective feedback and prompts. The results of this study suggest that, through engaging in construction of meaning with their peers, the Taiwanese university students demonstrate great amount of mutual support, feedback and guidance and have more opportunities to collectively scaffold their language development. At the end of the study, some pedagogical implications are discussed, which is believed to be beneficial for ESL/EFL teachers who are interested in increasing their instructional repertoires to maximise students' English learning.

Keywords: Peer collaboration, collective scaffolding, sociocultural theory, reading comprehension, meaning construction