Asynchronous online peer feedback for Japanese students' lexical diversity development

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Based on the sociocultural theory, asynchronous online peer feedback (AOPF) can provide learners with opportunities to scaffold their writing through online interactions across different time zones. Although the positive effects of AOPF on students' syntactic complexity were detected (Shang, 2017), the effectiveness of AOPF on other writing abilities, including lexical diversity (LD), is not revealed. Accordingly, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of students' AOPF on their LD in a Japanese tertiary educational context. This quasi-experimental case study model of mixed-methods research was conducted with 39 intermediate-level third-year university students (13 students in the no-peer-feedback (NPF) group, 13 students in the SOPF group, and the other 13 students in the AOPF group) for ten months, based on data collected through their online comments, and their genre-based essays and drafts. For this study, students wrote six genre-based essays: narrative, process, description, comparison, cause-and-effects, and argument. Students in the SOPF and the AOPF groups were told to provide feedback on their classmates' drafts and interact with them. No peer review rubrics were provided. All essays and drafts were analysed with the text inspector (2020), and the two-way repeated measures ANOVA tests were performed to compare their first drafts to their revisions and examine their LD development. Students' online comments were coded thematically. Findings revealed that, regardless of genres, while SOPF and the NPF groups had no statistically significant effect on students' LD, the AOPF group did. The qualitative data also illustrated that the AOPF group had more sociocultural scaffolding than the SOPF group. Since LD can assess learners' writing proficiency (Vo, 2019), the results of this study contribute to the second language writing field. While showing statistical data and some students' online feedback comments and writing samples, the presenter recommends the implementation of AOPF activities in online writing courses.