The assessment of severity differences across proficiency levels among peer-assessors

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Abstract

Over the past few years, peer-assessment, as an alternative assessment procedure, has drawn the attention of many researchers. In this study, it was attempted to find out what kinds of language components peer-assessors attend to when rating their peers' essays and to investigate whether proficiency levels of peer-assessors made a difference in terms of severity and leniency they exercised. Fifty-eight student raters at Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin rated five essays, using an analytic rating scale. Paper-based TOEFL test and five-paragraph essays were used to collect data. FACETS (version 3.68.1) and SPSS (version 24) were used to analyze the data. As for severity in peer-assessors when assessing the essays of their peers, the results showed that advanced peer-assessors had more variability in their severity compared to intermediate peer-assessors. The majority of peer-assessors were, on average, more severe than lenient. The results of an independent t-test revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the ratings of intermediate and advanced peer-assessors in rating, implying that the level of proficiency was not related to rating of the essays. According to the findings of the this study, it may be safe to conclude that proficiency of peer-assessors may not be an important factor to invest in because severity measures of both intermediate and advanced peer-assessors, on average, were not statistically significant.

Key words: Severity, Leniency, Proficiency levels, Criteria, Peer- assessment.