

## Efficacy of Self-assessment for Developing ESL/EFL Learners' Speaking Skill: A Study at the Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** This study examined how self-assessment plays a pivotal role in developing English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) learner's speaking skill. It has explored students' perceptions of using self-assessment to develop their oral performance. English is used as a second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) in Bangladesh. So, to develop speaking English, students must practice it outside the classroom. Self-assessment is one of the alternative ways to evaluate student's speaking ability in English; by this evaluation students can develop and discover their speaking skill. 46 students participated in the survey of this evaluation process. This study used only a quantitative method where the data were gathered through a questionnaire via Google form, whereas results were analysed descriptively using percentages. The results of this study found the benefits of self-assessment in enhancing speaking skills. Most learners admitted that self-assessment is considerably conducive to developing their self-functionality and beneficial to achieving their course objectives. Recommendations have been given for further improvements.

**Keywords:** Self- assessment, ESL, EFL, speaking skill, undergraduate learners

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most required skills to be acquired by EFL/ESL learners. It is the best way to deliver a message from one person to another. There have been used several assessment procedures through which teachers can assess student's performance. Besides teacher's assessment, self-assessment is one of the assessment processes where students can discover their linguistic growth and determine the functionality of the assigned courses (Marzuki et al., 2020). According to Römer (2017), assessment is a method that assists teachers in learning about students' progress in the classroom to achieve their objectives. Self-assessment is an effective strategy that engages learners more actively in learning (Qasem, 2020). Through self-assessment students can self-monitor their language progress and make awareness of their linguistic knowledge by applying it. EFL learners usually find difficulty speaking English, especially when discussing any topic. The possible reasons are insufficient knowledge about language, less practice, lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, etc. Nowadays, in Bangladesh, English plays a vital role, and most importantly, speaking in English has become one of the mediums of communication. Most educational institutions and working sectors demand people proficient in English. Therefore, self-assessment gets prioritized as an efficient tool that could help learners know the assignment's function and assessing criteria (Asdar, 2017).

Self-assessment is a form of formative assessment where assessment is conducted to enhance learner's language proficiency (Qasem, 2020; Ma & Winke, 2019). Self-assessment provides the student with the opportunity to self-reflect, self-monitor and self-evaluate their learning process (Gardner, 1999). It establishes student's consciousness of the quality of their work (Khabbazbashi, 2017). According to

Goral and Bailey (2019) self-assessment is a tool or procedure through which learners can gather what they can do or cannot do during their learning.

In Bangladesh, students learn English more than 12 years but many students find it difficult to communicate. In territory level teacher also cannot assist students in every step while practicing. By implementing self-assessment students will be interested in evaluating their own success (Goral and Bailey, 2019) cited by Masruria et al. (2021). The main role of this study is the student's opinions in implementing self-assessment. If the students do not know how to assess themselves well, they will not utilize their time. This means that students have to motivate themselves to increase their awareness of learning speaking.

Self-assessment affects the students or individual understanding because it helps to emphasize their high-quality thinking, self-reflective, and self-regulation where they can manage themselves to achieve their goals. Also, it affects individual understanding because it focuses on their high-order thinking, self-reflective, and self-regulation to achieve their goals (Khabbazzbashi, 2017). According to Devianti et al. (2014) the benefits of self-assessment is to encourage the students to know their strengths and weakness in their learning. Self-assessment has motivational effects which is essential when teaching young learners. Brown and Dove (1993) cited by Devianti (2014) reported that through self-assessment students can develop questioning and a self-analytic approach by using their higher level of reflection. According to Borg (2018) self-assessment develops student's skills for lifelong learning. EFL/ESL learners can assess themselves like the teacher. Self-assessment will help students reflect on their performance and judge themselves that how well they have performance by their own assessment criteria. As self-assessment is an on-going process, students can perceive their effort on language learning. The main objective of this study was to find whether self-assessment is effective or not in assessing speaking skill. The study also aimed to know students practicing self-assessment to develop their oral performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking is difficult and most challenging skill (Khabbazzbashi, 2017). Several studies have been conducted to show how self-assessment helps in oral development. Various studies have found the relationship between self-assessment and learner-centred approach or task-based language learning, this current study focuses on the EFL/ESL learner's perceptions about self-assessment in their way of learning speaking.

Different studies have attempted to analyze the role of self-assessment in oral production improvement. Leander (2012) researched how self-assessment strategies help learners to monitor their performance and how they can assess their improvements.

Butler and Lee (2010) studied on 6<sup>th</sup> grade EFL students who use self-assessment regularly and showed how self-assessment has small but positive effects and improve their speaking skill. Chalkia (2012) has studied how self-assessment is another way to learn speaking skills by EFL learners.

Mican and Medina (2017) researched how self-assessment could influence speaking skills and develop vocabulary of adult or university learners. The practical results came after observing how students assess their learning. Asdar (2017) studied how learners get the scope to know their progress in speaking through self-assessment. Borg and Edmett (2019) studied how self-assessment assists students to learn about their learning progress and make them autonomous learners.

According to Helin (2019), learners have to assess their own learning that makes them have positive attitudes and higher motivation towards learning. In their study, Butler and Lee (2010) also showed how self-assessment increased student's motivation which helps them to evaluate their language skills more accurately.

Many studies in the literature have showed how self-assessment leads to the oral proficiency and how remarkably it is connected to the accuracy of speaking. After the decline of teacher-centred approach self-assessment, a learner-centered approach has been predominantly contributing to learning language, especially those studying English as their second or foreign language. This present study

therefore highlights EFL/ESL learner's perceptions regarding using self-assessment for developing oral skill. The researcher has preferred this study because of it has been less explored on EFL/ESL learners in Bangladesh.

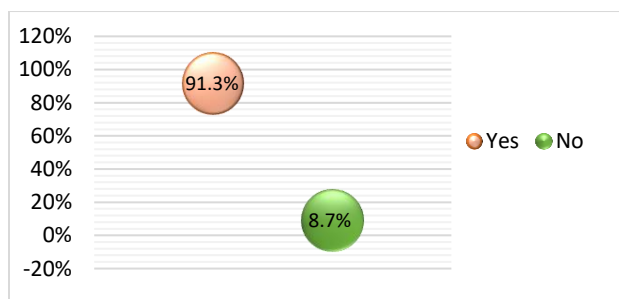
## METHODOLOGY

A quantitative study was applied to collect data for the current study. This quantitative research has investigated the possible benefits of using self-assessment for updating their speaking ability. The study was conducted among the tertiary students of private universities. All the students who were learning English as their second or foreign language were randomly selected. The respondents were from the English department. A Google questionnaire having ten questions was sent randomly to the learners. All the questions were close-ended. The questionnaire revealed the participant's opinions and reactions to the self-assessment practice. It comprises of the statements to which students responded on 2 points: yes or no. This researcher finally could able to receive 46 undergrad student's response who actively responded to the survey questions. The data have been analysed through percentage (%) and were shown in charts.

## RESULTS

Participants in this study completed some questions which examined their opinion of self-assessment in their speaking skill. Ten close-ended questions focused on learner's perception.

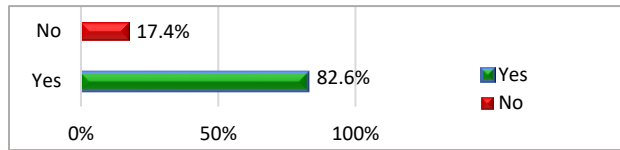
*Item-1:* The first item of statement was whether they practice self-assessment or not where more than half participants (91.3%) agreed that they practice it and other (8.7%) participants disagreed. Self-assessment is easier if learners are conscious about it (figure-1). As Bangladesh is a developing country, anyone can access themselves to learning through online. Butler and Lee (2010) researched on Korean students where they found that students apply self-assessment regularly. Pinner (2016) researched on some students where they complained about lacking objectivity in self-assessment but Chalkia (2012) found out that students prefer to do self-assessment in daily lessons.



**Figure 1.** Self-assessment is effective than formal teacher's assessment (Item-1)

*Item-2:* The second question was whether self-assessment was a positive experience for them; surprisingly, 90% of students agreed on this. Chalkia (2012) also found similar results where most students feel that self-assessment is a positive experience for them.

*Item-3:* When learners were asked whether self-assessment is more effective than formal teacher's assessment, 82.6% of students responded that self-assessment is more effective than formal test, and 17.4% do not think self-assessment is effective (figure 2). Sometimes class tests, mid-term examinations, final examinations, presentations, and assignments give more anxiety but by self-assessment they can improve speaking in indoor process. Through self-assessment students also can change their grade (Pinner, 2016). In the study of Mican and Medina (2017), students benefitted from self-monitoring and reflecting on their language learning.



**Figure 2.** Self-assessment is more effective than a formal teacher's assessment (Item-3)

*Item 4:* In the statement about where self-assessment develops their speaking skill or not 100% of participants agreed that self-assessment helps them improve speaking skills. Self-assessment helps explore and assess students speaking English (Maezuki et al., 2020). Masruria et al. (2020) in their research, reported self-assessment influences the students speaking skills positively. According to their research, self-assessment helps improving future performance. Also, this study shows that 100% of students benefit from self-assessment for improving speaking skills.

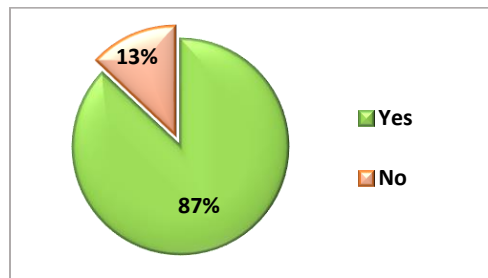
*Item-5:* Like the previous question, 100% of participants realized their strengths and weaknesses using self-assessment. Devianti et al. (2014) explained the benefits of self-assessment where teachers can encourage the students to know their strengths and weakness and get similar results.

*Item-6:* Another question was whether 'self-assessment improves their confidence level'. 100% of learners responded that self-assessment improves their confidence. If students practice self-assessment regularly, it is sure that they can speak better than before.

**Table 1.** Self-assessment for improving English

No.	Data from the questions of items 4, 5 & 6	Yes	No
Item-4	Self-assessment develops their speaking skill.	100%	0
Item-5	Individual strengths and weaknesses can be realized through self-assessment.	100%	0
Item-6	Self-assessment improves learners' confidence level.	100%	0

*Item-7:* In the statement about whether students practice self-assessment outside class, 87% of students said 'yes' and 13% disagreed with this (figure-3). Students can practice self-assessment in the classroom as butler & lee (2010) showed that students' self-assessment during class can increase school performance.



**Figure 3.** Whether student practice self-assessment outside class besides assessing in the classroom

*Item-8:* In a question about whether what type of self-assessment helps improve English, table-2 shows that 43.5% of students go with 'talking with yourself in front of mirror', 39.1% went with 'listening and imitation', and 17.4% went with 'role play'. As most of the students agree that "talking with yours" is a more effective way, that shows that students feel relaxed to assess themselves alone. It may increase their fluency in front of others.

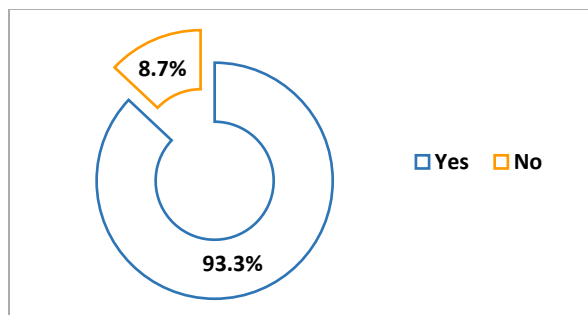
**Table 2.** Self-assessment for improving English (Item-8)

Items	Percentage (%)
Talking with yourself in front of mirror	43.5

Singing English songs	0
Role Plays	17.4
Listing and imitation	39.1

*Item-9:* In the statement when it was queried whether self-assessment is helpful to correct ongoing speaking ability. More than 87% of students responded positively that it helps them to understand their lacking. When students practice English speaking, they learn to know where they need to improve.

*Item-10:* In another statement, when asked whether it is easy to assess self-progress, 93.3% of learners said 'yes' and 8.7% said 'no' (figure-4). Munoz and Alvarez (2007) cited Marzuki 2020, who found that self-assessment helps assess oral performance.



**Figure 4.** Whether it is easy to assess self-progress

If students are trained on how to apply self-assessment, they will be able to judge their ability in their language learning Helin (2019). This present study showed how most learners agreed that this process helps assess them.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This current study explained the learners' perspective on using self-assessment to evaluate their speaking ability. Moreover, this study investigated the Bangladeshi EFL learner's opinions and reactions toward self-assessment. According to the survey, most students suggested that self-assessment is useful. Marzuki et al. (2020) and Masruria et al. (2021) found similar findings where most of their students considered self-assessment very helpful for developing their oral skill. This study believes self-assessment could help students motivate themselves to participate in improving speaking skills actively. And the most noticeable fact is that Bangladeshi students nowadays practice self-assessment for developing speaking skills daily; by this they can know about their strengths and weakness of language performance.

According to pinner (2016), students can assess their performance, and self-assessment is a good way to help them control their assessment procedure. Furthermore, to find the accurate results, the researcher did survey which give a vivid example of how and where self-assessment help students in learning process. By this study, about 100% agree that self-assessment helps to improve their speaking skills and over 90% of students claimed that it is easy to implement.

Self-assessment, an independent learning setting, identifies the specific area of learners where they need to improve. By this present survey, it would be referred that, by self-assessment students learned how far they have progress against their learning target. The self-assessment results show that students need individual approach during the language study. This present study result is connected with Chalkia (2012) that, student feel less stress to do self-assessment by themselves.

Nevertheless, the finding also indicates some difficulties: self-assessment is a long time consuming and students need to be very conscious and attentive toward their assessment process. Other challenges might happen when the students assess their oral performance, they may face problems pronouncing word correctly.

Furthermore, it suggested that students need to be guided by teachers and should give constant reminders if they assess their level and also need to be monitored their language practice. After this research, the researcher hopes teachers can use this assessment to know their students' spoken ability. It would also be suggested that teachers should be trained to engage learners in the effective use of self-assessment because teachers play an essential role in increasing communication skills with students and can also give good guidelines to the students.

## CONCLUSION

Self-assessment is unique and a promising way for English language learning in particular. Regarding the result of this present study, self-assessment could give many advantages for the student who tries to develop speaking skills. By using self-assessment, students can motivate themselves to achieve learning goal. The author distributed the questionnaire in this study to get students' perception. And the findings showed that there was a positive change in their speaking performance and learner appreciate this methodology as it improves their communicative skill in English. Self-assessment is an alternative assessment that can develop students in exploring and knowing their capability and knowledge. Self-assessment is an easy practice to do. This study mentioned that it is an effective alternative method that students can do outside class with their effort. So, self-assessment is highly recommended for use in the English learning process; though it has some limitations but it carries many benefits for students who are aware about their English usage.

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