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ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

The Effect of Self-assessment as a Meta-Cognitive Strategy on Improving Grammatical Knowledge of EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

self-assessment, grammatical knowledge, learner-centered approach

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The purpose of this study was to investigate whether self-assessment as a meta-cognitive strategy has any obvious effect on improving grammatical knowledge of Iranian EFL students. To achieve the purpose, 60 male junior high school students with the age range of 13-16 participated in this study. A Nelson test was administered to homogenize the two groups regarding language proficiency and outliers were discarded. One experimental and one control group participated in the study. To determine students' level of grammatical knowledge, a pre-test developed by Farhadi(2000) was administered. The result showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups. After the pre-test the treatment began. The control group received no extra instruction and underwent traditional assessment. Whereas the experimental group went through the process of self-assessment whereby they checked their own activities and found their own strengths and weaknesses. Self-assessment was practiced for six sessions for three months. A session after the treatment was over; a post-test developed by Farhadi(2000) was administered. The results were compared through an independent t-test. Results showed that self-assessment had a positive effect on improving students' grammatical knowledge. The findings of this study will help syllabus designers, teachers and students allocate specific time to self-assessment. Teachers can use self-assessment along with other activities to improve grammatical knowledge.

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Introduction

Students' involvement in the learning and assessment process is a vital component of their future success and has been increasingly recognized over the last two decades (Yan, 2020). Consequently, student-centered assessment forms like self-assessment are receiving more attention than ever before, despite the fact that they are time-consuming and challenging. For students to improve their learning, it is necessary to develop their capacity to supervise the quality of their learning (González-Betancor et al. 2019). Further, acquiring the skill of self-assessment is crucial for students to become effective in self-assessment of their learning and maintain sophisticated levels of self-assessment in future (Bourke, 2014). Researchers in the field of education consider self-assessment to be a crucial tool for empowering learners to organize, monitor, and sustain their learning. According to Chalkia (2012) self-assessment is the capacity that a person has to judge his/her performance and to make decisions about him/herself and his/her abilities. Other authors such as McMillan and Hearn (2008) have also asserted that self-assessment “stands alone in its promise of improved student motivation and engagement, and learning”. Based on Andrade (2019) study, self-assessment has been shown to have positive effects on academic achievement and learning, and research interest in this area continues to grow.

Learning a language takes place in a classroom. Traditionally the focus of the classroom is the teacher and what s/he does in order to facilitate learning. However, in recent years the spotlight has been turned onto the students who are actually doing the learning. Self-assessment produces learners who are more active and focused, and better placed to assess their own progress. In the student-centered classroom, the teacher is not the only source of information and the student is responsible for learning. The teacher

provides students with learning materials and strategies and helps students in learning activities. Self-assessment can not only make students more active, but it can also assist them with the daunting task of learning how to communicate in another language. Above all, they can be helped to perceive their own progress and encouraged to see the value of what they are learning. The focus on students' performance leads to frequent assessment of what students are learning. One way of carrying out assessment is through self-assessment, where students evaluate themselves.

Harris (1997) defined self-assessment as:

"one of the basic elements of self-directed language learning and a chance for learners to evaluate their own progress and concentrate on their own learning. It is a way of encouraging students to be part of the whole process of language learning"(p.12).

McMillan and Hearn (2008) have also asserted that:

“Self-assessment is more accurately defined as a process by which students: 1) monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior while learning and 2) identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills”(p. 40).

Self-assessment is a result of a change from a focus on teachers to focus on students. This change shows important changes in the roles of both teachers and students. Harris (1997) claimed that self-assessment is one of the fundamental elements of learner autonomy and self-directed language learning. It gives students a chance to evaluate their own progress and concentrate on their own learning process.

Entwistle(1987) stated that when students participate in assessing their own work, they are thinking about what they have learned and how they have learned; so, they are

frequently more conscious of their thinking and learning process. When learners try to assess their own progress, they need a standard by which they can measure their own performance. Most learners determine their ability if they have a standard by which to compare themselves.

Richard and Renandya(2002) declared that this self-response and assessment is a step toward learner autonomy. At the primary stage, self-assessment by students themselves needs a clear understanding of what is expected of them, motivation to reach it, a sense of pride in positive achievement, and a realistic judgment of weakness(Dann, 2002).

According to Brown and Hudson (1998) the advantages of self-assessment are speed, direct involvement of students, the encouragement of autonomy, and increased motivation because of self-involvement in the process of learning.

When students participate in assessing their work, they are thinking about what they have learned and how they learn. So, they are more aware of their thinking and learning processes which encourage a deep as opposed to surface approach to learning (Entwistle, 1987). A central purpose of self-assessment is to develop one's cognitive processes so that one's learning is developed.

The emergence of terms such as learner centered, student centered, personalized and individualized instruction put the focus on the centrality of the language learner to teaching/learning process. Besides paying attention to learners' interests (e.g. Campbell and Kryszewska,1992), learner centered activities should also be based on active learner involvement, and engage learners in self-assessment (Nunan,1998, Thomson, 1996).

Focusing on learner centered approach and giving importance to learner roles in education encouraged the researcher to include the learners in the process of assessment. In addition, based on Weden(2002), the notion of learner-centered instruction in foreign and second language is based on the recognition that language learners are diverse. They are different in needs, reasons for learning another language, their approach to learning and their abilities. Since it is difficult to cater for all these differences in one classroom and simultaneously, self-assessment can be a help to both teachers and students taking part in a course of instruction. Another point to be taken into account is that self-assessment as a metacognitive strategy for improving grammatical knowledge has not yet been researched in the studies. The previous studies more focused on the effect of metacognitive strategies on language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. This study is trying to find out how self-assessment will actually function in improving grammatical knowledge.

Learners of English as a second/foreign language must learn English grammar to master the language. Despite their proficiency in the English language, English language learners who lack grammatical competence cannot speak or use the English language accurately(Zhang,2009). Khansir and Farhad(2016) argue that English grammar teaching can improve students' language understanding. Similarly, Peng (2017) emphasized the importance of grammar in language teaching and learning. As Peng also stated, grammar cannot be neglected in English language learning. Without learning the grammar of a language, second language learners will have difficulty producing grammatically correct communication or writing.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it can affect the form of assessment. At the moment assessment is based upon traditional methods. If self-assessment proves

to be advantageous, then it may be able to modify the assessment and testing in Iran. Another important point is that this research engages learners and gives them a part in their own learning which can be motivating and can help achieve very positive results.

This study seeks to answer the following question:

Does self-assessment as a metacognitive strategy have any effect on improving grammatical knowledge of Iranian EFL students at the elementary level?

Review of Literature

Assessment

Erwin(1991:14) views assessment as "a specific procedure for analyzing, interpreting and using the information to enhance students learning and growth." According to Angel(1995), the purpose of assessment is to understand and enhance student learning. According to Richards and Schmidt(2002), assessment is a methodical way to obtain data and draw conclusions regarding student performance. Chapelle and Brindley (2010) state that self-assessment contributes to the set of specific learning goals and objectives relating to a learner's ability to use language effectively. It has been demonstrated that self-assessment raises self-awareness of learning, promotes learner autonomy, and facilitates self-regulation of learning(Bulter, 2018). Furthermore, it has been observed that it is positively associated with learner confidence and performance (Butler & Lee, 2010). Thus, it narrows the gap between learner perceptions and actual performance, thereby minimizing the mismatch between student assessment and teacher judgment(Babaii et al., 2016). According to Richards(2002), grammar acquisition involves four stages: noticing, discovering rules, accommodation, restructuring, and experimentation. These stages teach/learn grammar rules and grammatical abilities in

four speech skills. Hence, the self-assessment process is part of every stage and is intended to monitor and improve performance by means of continuous self-assessment.

Definition of self-assessment

Traditional classes are common in Iran. In these classes, the teacher is the only person who conducts the evaluation (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011). In this regard, traditional evaluation is a type of evaluation that has only one correct answer, while performance tests are like written and reading tests in classroom courses, and this type of evaluation does not seem so simple praise (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011). Nonetheless, to be able to compensate for the restrictions of teacher evaluation, other evaluations, such as self-evaluation, have received more attention (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011). Students learn to evaluate their learning process under the new approach, allowing them to recognize their strengths and limitations.

Self-assessment as a different form of evaluation has received substantial attention in recent times, with a focus on gauging students' learning capabilities (Naeini, 2011). As Noonan (2000) defined, the increased emphasis on learner centered and self-directed learning is linked to the rising attention to self-assessment. Richard and Schmidt (2004:475) describes Self-assessment as:

"Controlling one's performance in the process of language learning after testing one's proficiency in language. They also point out that self-evaluation is an instance of a meta-cognitive strategy in school teaching."

Liang(2006) elaborate on the word "self-assessment" as follows:

1. In learner centered programs, self-assessment is crucial.
2. Self-assessment differs from teacher evaluation goals, such as summative or final assessment.
3. Self-assessment is the capacity to appraise one's own learning outcomes and development.
4. Accurate self-assessment requires "clear criteria".
5. "Teacher involvement" in self-assessment processes can help students avoid misunderstandings in interpreting their data.

Self-assessment is defined by Panadero et al. (2016) as:

"a wide variety of mechanisms and techniques by which students describe (i.e., assess) and perhaps assign merit and worth to (i.e., evaluate) the quality of their own learning processes and products".

In its broadest sense, self-assessment is widely recognized as a learning strategy that promotes autonomy in language learning and allows learners to constantly evaluate their progress and decide on their learning difficulties. Accordingly, students take some responsibility for their learning process(Warchulski, 2015). According to Stan and Manea (2015), teacher assessment and student self-assessment can motivate students to continue their education and improve their academic performance. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, self-assessment is defined as the process by which students emit judgments of both the process and the outcomes of their linguistic products, comparing the results against defined criteria resulting in a conscious evaluation of where they are and the learning path to be followed in the journey of reaching the goals established by the criteria.

Types of self-assessment

A review of different self-assessment typologies by Panadero et al. (2016) found 20 distinct categories of self-assessment implementations. One of the simplest forms of self-assessment is to assign one's own work a grade or mark (sometimes called "self-evaluation" or "self-grading"). In a more complex form of self-assessment, strengths and weaknesses are analyzed rigorously, and formative feedback is formulated based on explicit criteria (Andrade, 2010).

In the context of foreign language learning, self-assessment can be further interpreted from two perspectives, namely, formative and summative. Summative perspectives focus on learning outcomes, while formative perspectives emphasize learning processes (Panadero et al., 2016). Formative self-assessment is used by students in order to generate feedback for themselves before formal grading, which is promoted as a valuable method of sustainable assessment (Harris & Brown, 2018). From this perspective, self-assessment refers to a cyclical process in which learners create and experience evaluation simultaneously with minimal reliance on teachers. In particular, learners are responsible for collecting and analyzing information regarding their knowledge, performance, and accomplishments (Sadek, 2018). After identifying and evaluating the possible approaches to improving various learning aspects against individual or pre-established criteria, students revise their work accordingly before formal evaluation (Yan, 2018).

Accordingly, some scholars have advocated against self-grading or self-scoring as they implicate summative self-assessment (Panadero et al., 2016; Andrade, 2010), which

may lead students to make a hasty judgment regarding work quality or task proficiency and, consequently, overlook the necessity of a sustained learning process (Pinner, 2016).

Advantages of self-assessment

Cuesta-Melo et al.(2022) state that when self-assessment advantages in language evaluation are integrated with cognitive self-assessment skills, higher performance levels will be achieved. In this regard, learners' development is becoming increasingly relevant to their success in various areas of their lives. One of the pivotal justifications for implementing self-assessment is emphasized by Harris(1997).

Some scholars, including Coombe and Canning(2002) and Liang(2006), discussed the benefits of using self-assessment. Their discussion of the benefits of using self-assessment is as follows:

1. Increasing learning,
2. Improving students' knowledge of one's own learning,
3. Enhancing students' focus on goals,
4. Increasing the amount of evaluation in effective areas,
5. Reducing the assessment burden for teachers,
6. Improving learner independence.

Finch & Taeduck(2002) also conducted an empirical research. They regarded self-assessment as a valuable means of improving oral abilities. The obtained results indicated that preparation for the test needed active spoken participation in lessons, lessons tended to utilize task based communicative teaching methods, the means became the end. The test was not only a reason for developing skills, but also a means of achieving the goal.

Firooz Zareh(2006) explored the association between various assessment methods and Iranian trainee's reading competency by putting two self-evaluation and conferencing strategies to use. His research's finding demonstrated the need for different assessment methods to be used in education and evaluation programs.

Tavakoli(2010; as cited in Larsari, Keysan & Widova, 2022) tried to look at the relationship between self-assessment and teacher assessment on performance testing and alternative assessment. He found that there is a high correlation among self-rating, teacher assessment and self-assessment in the classroom. He concluded that, the relationship between self-assessment and teacher assessment is significant.

Rahmany, Hassani, and Noroozi(2013) noted that although the students in control group were evaluated by their instructor, those in the experimental group evaluated themselves. The finding showed that self-assessment has little part in encouraging students' willingness to read English.

An action research study conducted by Caicedo Pereira et al. (2018) examined the effect of self-evaluation on grammatical knowledge of 27 foreign-language university and pre-university students in Colombia. According to the study, self-assessment of English grammar has several significant benefits. As an example, learners can be made aware of course objectives, their progress can be tracked, and their weaknesses identified. Accordingly, giving learners more control over their own learning and making them feel more responsible for it.

In another study, Rahayu and Purnawarman (2019) attempted to improve students' grammar understanding through self-assessment using Quizzes features. According to the results, students were able to self-assess based on their ability to identify their

strengths and weaknesses prompted by Quizzes: do the first quiz - receive feedback - review - replay the quiz - do the next quiz. In addition, the majority of students demonstrated a significant improvement in their grammar understanding as evidenced by their increasing scores across the three tests they took.

Zhang and Zhang (2022) implemented a self-assessment-based intervention in Chinese tertiary EFL writing classes through a quasi-experimental approach. To promote sustainable writing skills, students were randomly assigned to either an intervention class that implemented self-assessment or a comparison class that utilized peer assessment. The research findings indicated that the intervention group displayed significant improvement in holistic writing performance and rating accuracy than the comparison group. Additionally, the qualitative findings demonstrate that students have improved their rating accuracy as a result of the intervention.

Using postmodern perspectives and constructivist theories, Cuesta-Melo et al. (2022) examined the ways in which self-assessment affects students' language learning processes. They collected data from their reflective journals, focus group discussion comments, and an interview to analyze participants' reflections on their English learning process through an education program. Students responded positively toward reflection and commented that self-assessment evaluates more profound aspects of the self, such as autonomy, self-recognition, critical thinking, persistence, and self-efficacy. A focus group discussion, a journal, and a first language were also mentioned as facilitators of an in-depth self-assessment and a means to promote collective reflection.

Norouzi and Dhuli(2023) studied the effect of self-assessment on improving EFL learners' motivation in EFL grammar achievements. The results have provided further

evidence confirming that self-assessment as an alternative form of assessment is useful for accounting for students' performance and learning.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were 60 junior high school students. They were all boys studying at schools in Tehran. It should be pointed out that these students were in grade three of guidance school within the age range of 13 – 16. It is good to carry out this study for girls and see the results.

Instrumentation

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of self-assessment, there are three key factors that need to be considered: “training, feedback, and clear criteria”. Self-assessment should be taught to students by giving them clear concepts of their learning goals, identifying criteria that are strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrating how to do self-assessment through procedures (Moqbel, 2018).

This study made use of the following instruments:

A Nelson test (1976), series 050A that was used to homogenize subjects based on their language proficiency. This test consisted of 50 multiple choice items. A standardized Nelson test was the more suitable test for the students at this level and the difficulty level was near to students' textbook. Since it was a standardized test, so the reliability and validity were met. Also, these tests were graded in elementary, intermediate and advanced level and the proper test for this level and context was chosen. In fact, it consisted of MCQ test of grammar which students were familiar with.

Another instrument used was a test consisting of 50 multiple choice items adapted from Farhady (2000). This test was administered to the experimental and control groups in order to measure the students' grammatical knowledge. This test organized the items based on what students studied in the previous year. This test was developed for institutes as a placement test, so the reliability and validity were met. This test examined whether students' knowledge of grammar is near to each other or not.

Another test consisting of 50 multiple choice items adapted from Farhady (2000) was employed to find any probable improvement in both experimental and control groups after the duration of the study. This developed test for institutes as a placement test also met reliability and validity.

In addition to the above, six structure tests which were piloted with students similar to the subjects were also administered. These tests were teacher made and modified in different trials. The reliability was met through comparing students' scores in different administrations and consistency was observed. For validity, based on the teacher's experience, problematic items were discarded. Face and content validity was examined by colleagues and advisors and at the end, final revisions were used. In this study, self-assessment was carried out on the grammatical knowledge of the learners. Grammatical knowledge is considered as the knowledge of speech parts and syntactic relationships among words within a sentence. There was an emphasis on simple and progressive aspect of grammar. The reason that grammar is chosen in this study is because it is part of all language skills; easier than other components to teach and test and most experts agree on what must be included in structure tests (Farhady, Jafarpour, and Birjandi, 1995). Testing and teaching grammar is straightforward and above that deciding

whether you have answered the item correctly or not is clear-cut, therefore, it will be easy for students to carry out the self-assessment procedure.

In fact, the six structure tests were more suitable for students at this level. Preparing these items happened during the years of teaching. The researcher used these teacher-made tests for class activities in previous years. The researcher tried to decrease the problems that the items had. In fact, face, content and construct validity were met when administered to students similar to the students who participated in this study. Easy and hard questions which were considered as outliers and affected reliability were discarded during teaching and testing experience. So, the students' scores because of reliability didn't differ in multiple administrations. Reviewing the tests by good students and colleagues also helped the face, content and construct validity of the test.

Materials

It is normally accepted that to be able to evaluate students' performance, different evaluation methods should be used to measure it (Harris, 1997). In fact, Harris agrees that evaluation is crucial to learning a lesson among different students; because assessment makes students understand their needs and focus on understanding the learning process. In order to collect the data in this study, information on the students' self-assessment process was gathered and analyzed to determine to what extent self-assessment traits influenced their oral ability, specifically in grammar accuracy and grammatical range. The study was designed to be developed in four stages to cope with the four conditions suggested by Ross (2006) to carry out an appropriate self-assessment process:

- Define the criteria by which students assess their work.
- Teach students how to apply that criterion properly.
- Give feedback on their self-assessment.
- Help in using self-assessment data to improve their performance.

Procedure

The first step taken was to administer a Nelson test to homogenize the learners based on their language proficiency. After the tests were checked the outliers were discarded. Out of 70 learners who participated in the two classes, 60 students were selected. Out of these, 30 students were assigned to the experimental and 30 students to the control group. In the first session, a test adapted from Farhady (2000) was administered to both groups as a pre-test to investigate probable progress during the treatment sessions. Third, during the term, the teacher taught the grammatical items to both experimental and control groups. In addition to this, the experimental group received teacher made grammar tests, consisted of multiple-choice items. In the experimental group, the students completed the test and took it home and were required to score them from A to F and correct their wrong answers using their book and pamphlet before bringing them back the next session. In the next session, to check that they had done their homework, the assignments were collected and randomly distributed among their fellow students and then the correct responses were provided. After working on some problematic points, the scores were recorded, and the papers were returned to the students themselves. Through this procedure, students were able to recognize their own weaknesses and problematic areas and tried not to repeat the mistakes for the next sessions. They wrote down these mistakes and practiced the correct forms. These activities lasted for six sessions. Lastly, one week after the treatment was finished, both

groups took a similar post-test. The data obtained from this test was compared through an independent t-test.

Results

The results of the Nelson test that was administered for determining the homogeneity was as follows:

Table 1: The comparative table of the means and S.D. on Nelson Proficiency Test

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error of Means |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Experimental | 30 | 58.1667 | 7.4837 | 1.3663 |
| Control | 30 | 58.9167 | 10.8414 | 1.9794 |

A t-test was also run to see if a significant difference existed between the two groups.

The results of the t-test is as follows:

Table 2: T-Test results on Nelson proficiency test

| | t-observed | df | sig | t-critical |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Equal Variances Assumed | -.312 | 58 | .756 | 2.00 |
| Equal Variances Not assumed | -.312 | 51.523 | .756 | 2.00 |

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups on the Nelson Test. Before the treatment, a pre-test was administered to the students. The data was collected and analyzed. The following table shows the descriptive statistics:

Table 3: The descriptive statistics on the pre-test.

| | N | Mean | St. Deviation | St. Error of Mean |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Experimental | 30 | 15.4333 | 2.2312 | .4074 |
| Control | 30 | 15.4000 | 3.0721 | .5609 |

The scores obtained were compared using a t-test to see if there was a significant difference between these two groups:

Table 4: Results of t-test on the pre-test scores.

| | t-observed | df | sig | t-critical |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Equal variances Assumed | .048 | 58 | .962 | 2.00 |
| Equal variances Not assumed | .048 | 52.934 | .962 | 2.00 |

As the results of the t-test show there is no significant difference between the two groups on the t-test.

The treatment began after the pre-test was administered to the experimental group for six sessions. One session after completing the treatment, the post-test was administered.

The following results were obtained:

Table 5: The descriptive statistics of the post-test

| | N | Mean | St. Deviation | St. Error of Mean |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Experimental | 30 | 16.4667 | 1.5698 | .2866 |
| Control | 30 | 15.0167 | 1.7145 | .3130 |

The scores of the two groups were compared using a t-test to see if the difference between these two groups is significant.

Table 6: Results of t-test on the post-test scores.

| | T-obs | df | sig | T-crit |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Equal Variances Assumed | 3.417 | 58 | .001 | 1.4500 |
| Equal Variances Not assumed | 3.417 | 57.555 | .001 | 1.4500 |

The results reveal that the t-observed is larger than t-critical at .001 level of significance. So, the difference between the experimental and control groups is significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-assessment has a positive effect on improving grammatical knowledge of Iranian EFL students at the elementary level.

Discussion

Self-assessment, a logical outcome of interest in learner-centered education is used by successful students. This leads to decreasing the workload of the teacher and giving responsibility to the students and engaging them in the learning process which further results in motivation and interest. Self-assessment is also beneficial in improving linguistic skills. The results of this study show that when learners assess themselves, they learn the language better. This is because they take an active part in the process of learning and are engaged in it. When one is involved and engaged in a process, one is automatically motivated and as is widely known when a learner is motivated, learning will ensue and desirable results will be achieved. The findings of this research are in agreement with Pereira and e tal,(2018) study, so that the findings led to conclude that

learners highly benefit from applying self-assessment techniques using their grammatical activities and a language benchmark to compare with in the improvement of their grammatical range. Also, based on Hughes(2013) research, regarding the grammatical areas taken into consideration for the study, participants were more likely to detect their flaws in terms of accuracy, and raise awareness of the correct use of grammar which led to an improvement of other elements inherent to oral production, such as fluency and use of vocabulary.

The results of this study can be very interesting to teachers who still believe in teacher-centered classes. They can see that if learners are given an active part in class activities they will be more willing to learn. In Norouzi Larsari et al(2023) study, the research sought to ascertain the impact of using self-assessment as an alternative assessment on improving learners' academic motivation in EFL Grammar achievements. The results have provided further evidence confirming that self-assessment as an alternative form of assessment is a useful for accounting for students' performance and learning.

These results are consistent with the theoretical and empirical studies that contribute to the significance of self-assessment in language teaching. The results of the present study confirm the findings of de Saint Leger(2009), who claims that as a result of self-assessment, self-perception evolve positively over time in relation to fluency, vocabulary, and self confidence in speaking in the second language.

These results are consistent with the theoretical and empirical studies that contribute to the significance of self-assessment in language teaching. The results extend the findings of previous studies(Butler & Lee, 2010; de Saint Léger, 2009). The results of the

present study confirm the findings of de Saint Léger (2009), who claims that as a result of self-assessment, self-perception evolves positively over time in relation to fluency, vocabulary, and self-confidence in speaking in L2. Her study emphasized the potential pedagogical advantages of self-assessment at both cognitive and affective levels. These results are also in line with the findings of Butler and Lee (2010), who found that learners' ability to self-assess their performance improved over time as they concluded that self-assessment left a positive but marginal effect on English learners' performance and confidence.

Self-assessment produces learners who are more active and focused, and better placed to assess their own progress in terms of grammar. Observing the process of self-assessment activities in the classroom, the researcher found that, students who take part in self-assessment also showed more responsibility, involvement, autonomy and self-confidence. These learners were more active and they could locate their own strengths and weaknesses and had the opportunity to think about what they needed to do in order to get better marks.

Systematic self-assessment provides an ideal springboard for other learner development activities: organizing and planning learning, thinking about learning styles, discussion of learning and communication strategies. Alternatively, self-assessment can itself provide a central core of learner development in settings where full-blown learner training or explicit learner strategy instruction is felt to be too time-consuming.

Implications of self-assessment in the classroom can also be recognized. In light of metacognition, which involves the capacity to monitor, evaluate, and know what to do to improve performance as McMillan and Hearn (2008) have claimed, self-assessment

activates the necessary internal mechanisms that “includes conscious control of specific cognitive skills such as checking understanding, predicting outcomes, planning activities, managing time, and switching to different learning activities” (p. 42).

Syllabus designers and textbook writers can also fathom that they need to write material that incorporates self-assessment. In this process the needs of the students are placed at the center of the teachers' plans.

Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the effect of self-assessment as form of alternative assessment on Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivation for grammar achievements. The results support the effectiveness of self-assessment in promoting EFL learners' grammar and can be used to inform educational practices. The authors suggest that increasing awareness among students and teachers about the benefits of self-assessment, as outlined by Tamjid and Birjanid (2010), may be a useful first step in incorporating self-assessment into Iranian EFL grammar instruction. In fact, it is intended that we should increase students' and instructors' knowledge of self-assessment because it is uncommon in Iranian FEL contexts. So, by including self-assessment exercises in regular ELT lessons, students may better understand the desired learning outcomes, identify their strengths and shortcomings, and make plans for future progress (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011). Secondly, the students' comprehension of the learning goals can be improved by fostering a positive environment in the evaluation (Liang, 2006). For illustration, providing thorough instructor comments for modeling is an illustration of how to foster a conducive atmosphere for evaluation (Liang, 2006). Thirdly, teachers should choose "clear criteria to base their assessment on" if they want

to use self-assessment in their classrooms. In order to assess students' achievement, teachers and students must both agree on specific criteria(Liang, 2006.p.1). He really added that "well-defined grading standards and appropriate descriptors tend to provide a close guidance in the evaluation" as well (p.1). Fourth, the researchers assume that guided experience with assessment leading to independent self-assessment and create a feeling of autonomy and accountability (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011).

Self-assessment, posterior application of improvement techniques based on mistakes identification, and subsequent implementation of learning paths to overcome those mistakes based on language benchmarks, have been mostly used in the domain of grammar production.

Based on Kavytska and Osidak (2017), fostering grammar acquisition requires an updated look at the self. This study sought to investigate the effect of self-assessment as a form of alternative assessment on Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivation for grammar achievements. The results support the effectiveness of self-assessment in promoting EFL learners' motivation and can be used to inform educational practices. The authors suggest that increasing awareness among students and teachers about the benefits of self-assessment, as outlined by Tamjid and Birjandi (2010), may be a useful first step in incorporating self-assessment into Iranian EFL grammar instruction. In fact, it is intended that we should increase students' and instructors' knowledge of self-assessment because it is uncommon in Iranian EFL contexts. So, by including self-assessment exercises in regular ELT lessons, students may better understand the desired learning outcomes, identify their strengths and shortcomings, and make plans for future progress(Tamjid & Birjandi,

2011). Secondly, the students' comprehension of the learning goals can be improved by fostering a positive environment in the evaluation (Liang, 2006). Thirdly, teachers should choose "clear criteria to base their assessment on" if they want to use self-assessment in their classrooms. In order to assess students' achievement, teachers and students must both agree on specific criteria (Liang, 2006.p.1).Fourth, the researchers assume that guided experience with assessment might lead to independent self-assessment and create a feeling of autonomy and accountability (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011).

There are some implications for the educational instructors, teachers and policy makers to implement the concept of self-assessment in primary schools. So, the students can evolve their own learning:

1. The researchers should pay attention to improving self-assessment of students.
2. Policy-makers should consider applying self-evaluation and motivation in the field of education.
3. The proper implementation of self-evaluation is immediate need of the hour in teaching and learning textbooks and materials.

Self-assessment should not be restricted to the field of self-directed learning. In the conventional school, it is a practical tool, if implemented systematically and integrated into everyday classroom activities. Self-assessment can not only make students more active, but it can also assist them with the daunting task of learning how to communicate in another language. Above all, they can be helped to perceive their own progress and encouraged to see the value of what they are learning.

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