The Analysis of Self-Assessment Effect on EFL Students' Speaking Performance

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Abstract

Studies indicated that EFL students were often struggling in speaking due to their fear of making mistake. This becomes a problem as speaking is an essential skill needed to be able to communicate in the target language and become successful learners. This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of self-assessment on EFL students' speaking performance. It used library research with a method of document analysis by analysing previous related studies and theories. The results indicated that self-assessment has positive effect on students' speaking performance as it involves students in the process of evaluating their learning process, product or performance, and progress. The effects include identification of strengths and weaknesses, improvement of self-efficacy, and improvement of speaking performance. However, self-assessment needs to be implemented well by considering the assessment criteria and practices in order to achieve these positive effects.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Speaking Performance, Self-efficacy

Introduction

It is undeniable that English has become a language that granted the title of international language due to the fact that it is spoken widely across the globe. This creates a consensus that being fluent and skilled in English is equal to having better opportunities in career and social life (Mbato, 2013). Aware of this fact, the government of Indonesia has established English as one of the compulsory subjects taught as a foreign language in primary and secondary levels. There are four basic skills of English that students need to master, which are listening, reading, writing, and speaking, which are equally important. However, Darmawan et al., (2021) argue that in order to develop the skills needed to effectively communicate within the target language, EFL students are required to have speaking competence as their main goal is to be able to use English for communicative purposes. Similarly, Djahimo (2018) also suggests that speaking competence is important for EFL students as they need to be able to communicate their ideas orally effectively

to be considered as successful learners. That is why speaking competence becomes vital for students who learn English as a foreign language.

Speaking is a productive skill, meaning that students need to practice the language by speaking performance to demonstrate their competence (Hasanah, 2019). However, studies indicate that EFL students, especially the ones in Indonesia, are still struggling in speaking performance. A study by Erdiana *et al.*, (2020) shows that it is common to see students have difficulties and anxiety in recalling the words and respond to their teacher and other students when being asked to speak in English. Another study by Riadil (2020) demonstrates that students often make errors relating to grammar and vocabulary use, resulting in low English speaking performance. Similarly, study by Ratnasari (2020) suggests that students have difficulties in English speaking performance due to lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Study by Dayat and Yogyakarta (2019) also reveals that the speaking errors that students made affect their English grade, whereas the errors are related to incorrect omissions, unnecessary words, misused forms, confused forms, and misplaced forms. Moreover, the fact that English is learnt as a foreign language and is not used in their daily communication make students do not have enough exposure to the language (Fauzan, 2016).

Since it is a complex skill that needs to be mastered and performed by the students, innovative and effective way needs to be suggested to help the students perform better speaking comprehension. In order to find the best possible solution for the problem, it is important to firstly indicate the factors that contribute to the issue. A study by Pinto et al., (2021) shows that students had low speaking performance as they did not know how they were being assessed; they claimed that feedback about their performance was not given and they did not understand the requirements needed to achieve satisfactory results, which then resulted in low grades and low speaking performance. Studies by Rahayu et al., (2020), Riadil (2020), and Ratnasari (2020) show that students are hesitant to speak as they are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at because of the mistakes. Moreover, study by Ariyanti (2016) and Ratnasari (2020) further reveal that they are anxious as they believe they do not have proper vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In line with the findings, Sayuri (2016) also found that the low speaking performance is caused by low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness to speak, nervousness, and having nothing to say.

Thus, it can be seen that some of the factors that contribute to students' low speaking performance are related to their understanding and knowledge about what is being assessed and their self-efficacy, which is related to their perceptions about their capabilities in organising, executing, and achieving an expected level of challenging task (Darmawan et al., 2021). Considering these factors, self-assessment can be seen as a solution that can be proposed to solve the issue. It is because self-assessment involves the students to evaluate or describe their own learning processes and products (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). In line with it, Wisnu and Pradana (2020) define self-assessment as a form of assessment that requires students to judge the quality of their work and performance in accordance to explicit criteria and evidence for the purpose of performing better in the future. Self-assessment can be beneficial for students' speaking performance as it challenges them to question and reflect on themselves, which then builds self-

awareness and active involvement in the study (Jiwandani et al., 2021). Through self-assessment, students do not only focus on their weaknesses as they also get to know their strength and identify the aspects that need to be improved (Darmawan et al., 2021).

Some empirical studies related to the issue have discussed how self-assessment and students' speaking performance are related. An experimental study by Zam (2010) indicates that the implementation of self-assessment has positive contribution to students' speaking performance. Similarly, studies by Ariafar and Fatemipour (2013), Marzuki et al., (2016), Hasnani and Mubarak (2019), and Masruria et al., (2021) also suggest that the implementation of self-assessment in speaking learning results in improvement of the students' speaking competence and performance. Study by Awwalien (2019) also found that self-assessment done by the students can also influence teacher-assessment and have beneficial effects on students as they become understand about the assessment criteria and do not underestimate their own ability. In addition, even though students have found to have negative perception about their abilities, study by Asdar (2017) suggests that students have positive perception towards self-assessment as it is considered to be beneficial for their learning.

As speaking is a pivotal skill needed by the students and self-assessment is indicated as a promising strategy that can be used to promote it, it becomes important to find the effect self-assessment has to the students' speaking competence. Moreover, as there are not many studies related to the issue, this study becomes more urgent. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to investigate the effect of self-assessment on EFL students' speaking performance in English speaking competence. This study is important to be conducted considering the significance of having a good speaking competence in current globalization era and finding the best way to promote speaking to the EFL students. This study was conducted as a document study by analysing and investigating related studies and theory in order to present a comprehensive understanding and information about the issue. This study served as a review of the updated theory and research on the effect of self-assessment on students' speaking performance.

Method

With the aim of investigating the effect of self-assessment on EFL students' speaking performance, this study used descriptive qualitative approach as the design of the study. Qualitative study is used to explore and investigate human issues or social phenomena that are related to certain groups or individuals with their own characteristics (Creswell, 2014). Descriptive study, on the other hand, is defined as a study that explores an existing phenomenon and systematically present the results in a descriptive way as accurately as possible (Williams, 2007; Atmowardoyo, 2018). Therefore, considering the aim of this study, descriptive qualitative design was considered appropriate for this study as it qualitatively investigates an existing phenomenon.

To collect the data, library research was conducted. According to (Hasan, 2002) library research is the research carried out using literature in the form of books, notes, and reports on research results from previous research. Investigation of the topic through documents can be conducted as documents or texts since they naturally serve as the source of data which do not only

give information but also context, making them justified as the main sources that provide reliable and valid results.

The data were taken from several studies that have been conducted by other researchers that were related to the topic of this study. They included the studies conducted by Zam (2010), Ariafar and Fatemipour (2013), Marzuki et al., (2016), Hasnani and Mubarak (2019), Asdar (2017), Awwalien (2019), and Masruria et al., (2021) which are related to the implementation of self-assessment in EFL classes and its relation to students' speaking skills. In addition, other studies and theories from are also included to enrich the discussion of the study. There are several steps are taken to collect this data, such as searching for and collecting data from journals or articles, recording the results that found in the data, and finally concluding the findings.

After the data were collected, an analysis was conducted to further discuss the issue and conclude the study. Data analysis procedure suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used in this study. There were three stages that were adapted to this study, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. As the name suggested, in data reduction stage, the data taken from the previous related studies were being sorted reduced to make sure that only necessary and related data were used in this study. Then, in the data display stage, the data were systematically and descriptively presented in the results and discussion section. Finally, to conclude the study, a conclusion was drawn in the conclusion drawing stage.

Findings & Discussions

The purpose of this research is to find out the used of self-assessment in speaking will help the student or not. Because as we know, the government of Indonesia has established English as one of the compulsory subjects taught as a foreign language in primary and secondary levels. There are four basic skills of English that students need to master, which are listening, reading, writing, and speaking, which are equally important. Especially in speaking, speaking is a skill that is quite difficult for everyone to master. They need an appropriate and convenient ways to speak more fluently. The method used to collect this data is qualitative descriptive. According to (Nassaji, 2015) qualitative descriptive is a method of collecting data by analysing the data collected qualitatively. The goal of this method is usually to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics.

The results of the document analysis indicate that self-assessment has several effects on EFL students' speaking performance. The effects indicate that the implementation of self-assessment in speaking learning results in improvement of the students' speaking competence and performance. First, study by Zam (2010) conducted pre-test and post-test to students to see if self-assessment had any effect on their speaking skills. Through the test, the students were categorized into five categories, which were very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor. The experiment was conducted through six meetings. The results of the pre-test indicated that 75% of the students were categorized as very poor. On the post-test, improvement was seen as 42% of the students were now classified as good and 50% of them as fair, indicating an improvement.

Study by Ariafar and Fatemipour (2013) also found that students who received self-assessment practices during the semester had better speaking ability compared to those who did

not. Further, the students were also reported to have positive perception about self-assessment as they considered it to be helpful and had willingness to continue doing self-assessment in the future. Similarly, Marzuki et al., (2016) also suggest that students thought of self-assessment as very helpful as it allowed them to know their ability and develop it to achieve the learning goals, especially the ones related to speaking. In line with the previous studies, Asdar (2017) also reports on his study that there was an increase of 40% in students' speaking ability after they were practiced to do self-assessment. Study by Masruria et al., (2021) also found that most students thought of self-assessment as helpful since they could improve their communication by acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses. Students also reported to feel assisted by self-assessment in increasing their self-efficacy, which included their confidence; self-regulation, which includes their awareness of time management and independence; and engagement in the classroom

Then, study conducted by Hasnani and Mubarak (2019) indicate that students faced some difficulties in the implementation of self-assessment as they were not used to it. However, they believed that it is important as they could know their ability in spoken interaction as well as be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they could do better in the next performance. Awwalien (2019) also suggests that exercising students on how to do self-assessment can have positive effect on their assessment consistency. However, he also notes that students can be confused when doing self-assessment for the first time. Thus, they need to get introduced and used to it through practicing.

Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that the studies from the past 11 years, from 2010 to 2021 show consistency on the effect self-assessment has towards students' speaking performance. There are three main effects of self-assessment on EFL students' speaking performance that can be seen. They are (1) identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, (2) increasing students' self-efficacy, and (3) improving their speaking performance. All of these effects are related to each other. Self-assessment can help students to identify their strengths and weaknesses as it involves them in the evaluation and description of their learning process, product, and progress that requires them to judge their own work based on given criteria (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013; Panadero & Botella, 2017; Wisnu & Pradana, 2020). They know and are able to identify because self-assessment is actively carried out by themselves (Hati et al., 2021). This identification process is closely related to learner autonomy whereas the students are able to reflect and evaluate what they have learnt (Gholami, 2016) and self-monitoring which enables them to notice their own actions, examine the effects of the actions, and use the observation to improve (Pstein et al., 2008).

When students are aware of their strengths and weaknesses they can make adjustment, adaptation, improvement, and change in their work or performance to best meet the assessment criteria (Earl & Katz, 2006). This is why self-assessment is a part of formative assessment, because continuous adjustment and correction are conducted to promote learning and improvements in performance. Encouraging the students to involve themselves in self-assessment activities will make them be more confident and have greater sense of responsibility (Andrade, 2019; Hati et al., 2021; Lesmana & Rokhyati, 2020), which is why it leads to improvement of self-efficacy. Rather

than surrender themselves to their weaknesses, students will learn how to take careful look at their weaknesses and strengths and use them as sources to reflect and improve further (Hati et al., 2021). In addition, self-assessment also changes students' conception about learning as they know what to do based on the criteria, which makes them have more confident on what they do (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2013), which by the end affecting their speaking performance. They can judge their capabilities in performing the task given rather than blatantly judging their personal qualities (Paramartha, 2016).

Improvement on students' speaking performance can be achieved as their self-efficacy leads them to it. As suggested by Paramartha (2016), efficacy beliefs are not a single character. Rather, they are multidimensional, meaning that they link to different aspects of functioning. In this case, their improved self-efficacy links them to have better performance as they believe that they are able to perform the task and be successful. Having self-efficacy does not only limited to having confidence and belief as it also involves motivation and goal. However, Paramartha (2016) notes that feedback needs to be given regularly as to not making the students overconfident and end up underestimating the process. All in all, students who can identify their learning progress and be motivated to develop themselves further eventually leads to improvement on speaking performance (Chen, 2008), which is in line with the results of the studies being analyzed.

However, it is important to note that the implementation of self-assessment needs to be prepared beforehand. As the study conducted by Hasnani and Mubarak (2019) suggested, self-assessment can also be difficult and tiring for the students even though they realise it is for the better of themselves. Meihami and Razmjoo (2016) also reveals that self-assessment can be challenging due to practicality problems that involves limitation in resources and time. Further, as students can find difficulties when doing self-assessment for the first time (Awwalien, 2019), teachers need to have clear, explicit self-assessment criteria that are shared to the students before it is conducted so that they understand the goal (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013).

Conclusions and Suggestions

In conclusion, self-assessment can be very beneficial for students' speaking performance as it offers some positive effects. Students can identify their weaknesses and strengths which then motivate them to improve further. Then, their self-efficacy, which is related to their confidence and awareness of their capabilities will also improve. As they become more motivated to improve themselves, their speaking performance will also be eventually improved as they no longer tied to the shyness and anxiety they once had.

However, since the results also found that self-assessment can be difficult for students, teachers are suggested to introduce it to the students and give explicit, clear assessment criteria to help them understand. Further, students are also suggested to practice self-assessment to improve their English competency. As for other researchers, it is suggested that further research is needed related to how self-assessment can be creatively used to improve other skills in English.

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