

Self-Assessment of Physics Students' Oral Presentations to Enhance Their English Speaking Skill

التقويم الذاتي لأداء طلبة الفيزياء من حيث الإلقاء الشفهي لبحوثهم في مجال الظواهر الفيزيائية من أجل تحسين مهارة التحدث باللغة الانجليزية

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Abstract:

This qualitative study sought at exploring the beneficial value of implementing self-assessment for assessing oral presentations so as to fine-tune Physics students' English speaking skill at Physics Department during the whole academic year 2021/2022, Higher Normal School of Bechar. To this end, the researcher adopted a descriptive method in which she assumed the role of an active observer herself. The research data were gathered by means of classroom observation guidelines of students' oral presentations as well as taking field notes to notice the process of self-assessment execution and exploring its feasibility and efficiency in enhancing physics students' oral proficiency. To analyze the data, the researcher used descriptive analysis. The findings indicated that physics students' English speaking skill was improved after they were exposed to self-assessment activity in English for Physics (EP) course. Thus, it is highly recommended that implementing self-assessment tool in English for Specific Purposes course will enhance ESP students' English speaking skill.

Keywords: English for Physics; English for Specific Purposes; physics students; self-assessment; speaking skill

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الكيفية إلى استقصاء أثر تطبيق التقويم الذاتي لتقييم أداء طلبة الفيزياء من حيث الإلقاء الشفهي لبحوثهم في مجال الظواهر الفيزيائية من أجل تحسين مهارة التحدث باللغة الانجليزية خلال السنة الأكاديمية 2022/2021 بالمدرسة العليا للأساتذة (بشار). لتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة، اعتمدت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي حيث قامت بدور الملاحظ بنفسها وذلك باستخدام الملاحظة الميدانية كأداة للدراسة. لتحليل نتائج الدراسة، تبنت الباحثة التحليل الوصفي. من خلال نتائج الدراسة، استنتجت الباحثة أن تطبيق التقويم الذاتي قد طور أداء الطلاب من حيث التحدث باللغة الانجليزية بطلاقة و سلاسة حيث كان له أثر فعال في تحسين مهارة الإلقاء الشفهي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مصطلحات فيزيائية بالانجليزية، تدريس الانجليزية لأغراض خاصة، طلاب الفيزياء، التقويم الذاتي، مهارة التحدث باللغة الانجليزية

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1- Introduction

Unlike conventional assessment techniques through which learners are tested by their instructors, self-assessment accords with recent language learning epistemologies and pedagogies which are designed to increase active and autonomous learning as well as training learners to be self-reliant and independent participants who will be able to confront real-life dilemmas. That is to say, the new role assumed to EFL learners as being active agents in the learning process is conducive to a paradigm shift in assessment practices (Lee & Chang, 2005). They further add that learners are responsible not only for their own learning but also for the assessment of their performances in terms of procedures and rationales (Lee & Chang, 2005). Accordingly, one of these innovative techniques is self-assessment which is the crux of this descriptive study. The urgent need for more reflective and lifelong learners has prompted a reconsideration of the relationship between learning and assessment, and has greatly affected the establishment of alternative assessment tools, namely self-, peer-, and co-assessment. (Sluijsmans, Dochy, & Moerkerke, 1998). Thus, one of the key concepts in language education, today, is learner-centeredness which is mainly concerned with the active involvement of learners in the assessment process of their own progress which underpins the development of their critical self-consciousness within the learning process (Nunan, 1998).

However, in Algeria, there are few studies focused on self-assessment as an alternative assessment method to assess EFL/ ESP students' oral proficiency, especially at the tertiary level. For this reason, self-assessment was expected to be an alternative tool used in the English for Physics (EP for short) course to enhance physics students' English speaking skill. By using self-assessment, students were provided with the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process via gauging their own oral performance and rethinking their own learning. Moreover, self-assessment could motivate students to take charge and reflect on their learning process.

This study, therefore, attempts to explore how self-assessment activity could bolster physics students' speaking skill. First of all, it reviews literature that is mainly concerned with the core concepts of the current study. After that, it describes the method adopted by the researcher to collect necessary data and, eventually, concludes the efficiency of this alternative method in the EP classroom. Thus, it addresses the research question as follows:

- How can self-assessment activity enhance EP students' learning process in general, and speaking skill in particular?

1– Literature Review:

2.1– Assessment of Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is the skeleton of language proficiency that enables learners to communicate appropriately and effectively in authentic encounters. Assessing speaking ability is the neglected core heart of language proficiency. In Knight's words, "assessing speaking skill lags far behind the importance given to reading, listening and writing skill" (Knight, 1992). Thus, the majority of EFL instructors are unfamiliar with innovative techniques for assessing productive skills, namely writing and speaking. They used to assess their students speaking skill via conventional paper-and-pencil test formats. However, this method is more appropriate for assessing receptive skills, such as reading and listening comprehension tests. Accordingly, crucial self-assessment of speaking skill necessitates an in-depth understanding of speaking skill criteria and the learners' ability to accurately assess their own oral output, thereby self-monitoring and self-regulating their own learning process.

Despite what has just been said, learners as language proficiency raters will confront some hindrances, including limited language proficiency, lack of confidentiality, objectivity and reliability. Furthermore, assessing speaking skill *per se* is a challenging, time-consuming and sophisticated task that requires EFL/ ESP teachers to devote more effort and time to accomplish it efficiently. There are many predicaments to assessing speaking skill that make teachers reluctant or lack validity of their assessments. Such problems include the practical problem of finding the time and facilities to test oral ability; the problem of designing productive and relevant speaking activities, and the problem of being consistent on different occasions and between different assessors; and deciding which criteria to use in making an assessment (Knight, 1992).

To this end, EFL/ ESP instructors should look for feasible techniques to assess their learners' speaking skill by taking into consideration specific assessment criteria, including vocabulary, accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, and content. Nunan (1999) puts forward that speaking proficiently entails linguistic competency in terms of the well-articulation of sounds, sufficient vocabulary, mastery of grammatical structures and functional and strategic competence (Nunan, 1999). Stated differently, assessing speaking skill, especially in the EFL /ESP settings, is a burdensome procedure for EFL/ ESP teachers. On the one hand, they should decrease their use of summative assessment as the main approach to judging their students' language achievement. On the other hand, they should adopt alternative learning-centered approaches to assessment.

2.2– Traditional vs. Alternative Speaking Assessment Tools

Assessment, by definition, is a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability (Brindley, 2001, p. 137). Arends (2004) states that assessment can be used not only to measure students' ability in receiving knowledge and teachers' ability in transferring knowledge but also to make instructional decisions about the process of collecting data about students and classroom practices (Arends, 2004). In other words, assessment in learning is a process to gain information related to important variables in learning that teachers take into account to improve their learners' learning process and their academic achievement. It has the goal to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses during the teaching-learning process (Herman, 1992).

Traditional testing has been popular in most educational settings, especially in Algerian EFL/ ESP classrooms. It is, to some extent, a feasible traditional method that enables EFL teachers to optimize their students' language competency, identify the objectives of curricula, plan instruction, reinforce the teaching and learning process and promote educational achievement (Tasgari, 2004). For Duque-Aguilar, J. F. (2021), in his descriptive qualitative study through classroom observation, interviews and documentary analysis, EFL teachers prefer summative assessment instead of formative one to determine their students' progress in terms of speaking proficiency. Moreover, most EFL classrooms focus on summative assessment practices which aim at measuring learners' mastery of discrete language points and linguistic accuracy rather than assessing their communicative competence, namely writing and speaking competencies (Shaaban, 2005).

Yet, this conventional method, summative assessment, is inappropriate in providing information about students' perceptions, opinions, motivation, and learning styles and strategies as it does not reflect their critical thinking skills. Self- assessment, therefore, has been adopted by many language educationalists as an ongoing process and integral part of the learning process, involving students in making judgments about their own progress (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996). It emphasizes the *process* by which learners produce an outcome rather than the final *product* (Puhl, 1997).

With a growing interest in assessment for learning or formative assessment, more researchers are interested in learner involvement in speaking proficiency assessment (Luoma, 2004). Assessment for learning employs assessment data to enhance the language teaching and learning process; however, assessment of learning or summative assessment uses assessment data as a report with summative purposes. In plain terms, traditional testing, which focuses on summative outcomes, does not provide a formative measurement of students' development necessary for planning instructional strategies; however, alternative assessment, self-assessment, better reflects the developmental changes

in language learning. Ako (2009) also puts forward that traditional assessment enables instructors to hold all the power and make all the decisions to prevent learners from self-regulating their own learning, improve their meta-cognitive and social learning strategies. However, EFL students need an innovative assessment method that accords with learner-centeredness, and that potentially draws their attention to those aspects as they have to do a reflection on their own achievement to improve their linguistic performance (Ako, 2009).

2.3– Self-assessment as an Alternative Method for Assessing Speaking Skill

Assessment is perceived by language educationalists as the core heart of the fruitful teaching-learning process. “Assessment is often considered as an important instructional step” (Bachman, 1990). That is, the success of any learning program is gauged by successful assessment procedures and outcomes (Fulcher, 2003). Effective assessment requires a specific criterion, an appropriate task, a maximum output, and practical and reliable scoring procedures (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Accordingly, assessing speaking skill is a burdensome task for many EFL instructors. To say that a speaking skill assessment is trustworthy, some factors should be taken into account, such as practicality, validity, reliability, and authenticity (Hughes, 2003). From this, EFL teachers should look for alternative assessment techniques that cater for their learners’ styles and needs, such as the inclusion of self-assessment in the EFL/ ESP context. Therefore, self-assessment is an alternative assessment method that refers to the involvement of learners in making judgments about their own learning, particularly about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning (Boud & Falchikov, 1989). Self-assessment is regarded as a crucial way that enables learners deeply recognize the function of the task and the assessment criteria (Asdar, 2017). Additionally, Gronlund and Cameron (2004) stress the key role of self-assessment as a way to effectuate the principles of formative assessment with the purpose to monitor learning progress and providing corrective prescriptions to improve learning. Thus, ESP/ EFL learners will be provided with the opportunity to be knowledgeable of their own progress and academic achievement.

Alternative assessment tools, self- and peer-assessment, allow learners to (a) being actively engaged in the assessment process, (b) reflecting on their own learning process, (c) thinking critically and developing the most important cognitive skills, such as cooperative learning, decision making, self-monitoring and self-regulation, problem solving skills (Sluismans, Dochy, & Moerkerke, 1998). Oscarson (1989) briefly itemized the rationale of self-assessment procedures in language learning as (a) it promotes learning; (b) raises awareness; (c) improves goal-orientation; (d) expands a range of assessment; (e) share assessment burden; fosters autonomous learning (Oscarson, 1989). “Self-assessment is a

process by which students monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills” (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). Self-assessment takes place when learners judge their own tasks to improve their own performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes. It is a dynamic process in which students self-monitor, self-evaluate and identify correctives to learn. It is a critical skill that enhances student motivation and achievement” (McMillan & Hearn, 2008).

As far as the merits of self-assessment are concerned, self-assessment can foster students’ high-order thinking skills, meta-cognition, self-regulation and self-management of their academic goals (khabbzbashi, 2017). That is to say, it helps students use a higher level of reflection via questioning and self-analytic approach to their professional practice and being involved in deep rather than surface learning (Brown & Dove, 1993). Moreover, self-assessment does enhance learner autonomy in addition to other advantages such as increasing students’ awareness of the assessment criteria, helping students make specific comments and questions about their performances, and enabling the teacher to individualize attention and helping students identify the individual characteristics of their performances (Lee, 2005). Students who learn to assess their own performance move from being “other-regulated” to being “self-regulated” learners, and thus taking charge of their own learning (Cameron, 2004). Involving EFL learners in the process of assessment is of beneficial value to enhance their language proficiency. Such instance is self-assessment which is defined as a process of learners’ evaluation of their progress in knowledge and their improvement in language proficiency. That is, self-assessment enables the learners to access a range of experiences and opportunities to understand and examine themselves, their knowledge, skills and attitudes towards the learning process (Bourke & Mentis, 2006). Self-assessment has been integrated into ELT as a key component of assessment and an integral part of autonomous language learning programs by many language educationalists everywhere since a significant part of language programs has become more learner-centered ones. Finch (2022) claims that without learner self-assessment, there can be no real autonomy. Therefore, learners will gain the ability to control their own progress, assess their competence, manage their learning and determine how to make use of the tools and facilities provided within and outside the classroom (Chalkia, 2012).

Most importantly, self-assessment does increase EFL/ ESP students’ motivation. Adams & Kings (2006) argue that self-assessment is important because it can help English students to be motivated to learn and reflect on their own English learning (Adams & Kings, 1995). “Self-assessment can promote intrinsic motivation, internally controlled effort, a mastery of goal orientation, and more meaningful learning” (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). Add to this, self-assessment is also beneficial for EFL/ ESP teachers themselves

since learners are involved in the learning process, and that the assessment burden is shared between teachers and students. This minimizes the instructors' workload and helps them devote more time and effort to devise resources and materials (Blue, 1988). It is also a feasible tool to be prepared and administered in comparison to other traditional paper-and-pencil tests. Self-assessment provides a means for stimulating ongoing dialogue and collaboration between program directors and instructional staff around the interrelated goals of effective classroom practices, professional development, and positive learning outcomes (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Self-assessment is a vital skill that raises learners' motivation and success because it helps them self-monitor, self-evaluate and determine the correct methods to improve their learning (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). In lucid terms, self-efficacy and self-confidence in the learning process could be only accomplished by self-assessment (McMillan & Hearn, 2008).

However, there are also some demerits of integrating self-assessment in the EFL/ESP contexts. It requires comprehensive self-questioning and therefore less proficient learners may face some difficulties when attempting to self- or peer-assess their language performance compared to more proficient learners (Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 1997). Another disadvantage is that it incurs extra time and effort. As far as accuracy of scores is concerned, some studies found that students overrate their performances, whereas other studies indicated that students underestimate their performances when they were asked to self-assess their own work. The last disadvantage is the students' bias. Therefore, teachers' intervention in the objectivity of self-assessment becomes an integral part of implementing self-assessment.

There are a plethora of both quantitative and qualitative studies that investigated the crucial impact of integrating self-assessment as an alternative method for language proficiency assessment. To start with, a study conducted by McDonald and Boud (2003) analyzed the question of whether self-assessment practices can develop the quality of the performances of high school students. The study claims that self-assessment training may influence the quality of students' performances. Add to this, Leger (2009) conducted a study to explore how students could enhance the perception of their speaking proficiency level via using self-assessment. The results divulged that the participants' self-perception improved especially in terms of fluency, vocabulary and self-confidence while speaking French. Therefore, self-assessment is useful not only cognitively but also affectively.

As far as quantitative studies are concerned, Baniabdelrahman (2010) conducted an experimental study to investigate the impact of self-assessment on EFL students' reading comprehension. The results showed that self-assessment had a positive effect on their reading comprehension since it encourages students to participate more openly and helps them to give more accurate and honest responses, helps them direct their own learning

efforts more effectively and makes students more involved and motivated in the learning process. Moreover, Hooshangi et al. (2014) state that self-assessment has been one of the most popular assessment topics to be discussed because of its importance for increasing learner autonomy and learner-centered education. In their empirical study, they examined the effect of self-assessment on EFL students' oral performance ability. They found that self-assessment increased EFL learners' oral performance ability (Hooshangi, Mahmoudi, & Yousofi, 2014). According to the results of another study held by Shahrakipour (2014), students with an intermediate level of language proficiency improved their listening and speaking abilities with the help of a self-assessment activity to which they were exposed. The statistical analysis showed that the speaking scores of self-assessment were higher than those of listening skills scores which unveiled that the impact of self-assessment was higher in speaking than in listening and reading skills.

Furthermore, Karakaya (2017) conducted a study in the Turkish EFL context to find out the effect of self-assessment on English speaking skill. The results revealed that the implementation of self-assessment helps students gain awareness of their own learning process and motivates them to speak English fluently. More importantly, the findings indicated that students perceive self-assessment as a stimulating and engaging method to develop their speaking skill and to get involved in their own learning process. Thus, self-assessment of speaking skill can be implemented as an influential learning strategy to improve students' oral performances and motivation. Similarly, Ma & Winke (2019) executed an empirical intervention to find out whether self-assessment is a reliable and crucial tool or not. The results divulged that it renders learners self-conscious of their oral proficiency, thereby self-monitoring their progress towards the syllabus goals. Avilez and Larenas (2020) also carried out an experimental study in which EFL learners were exposed to English through task-based lessons that required their self-assessment to develop their speaking skill. The results divulged that there was a positive change in their oral performances and they enjoy this innovative method as it developed their academic achievement.

Additionally, myriad qualitative studies attempted to measure both EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of self-assessment in their classroom practices. To begin with, Bullock (2011) conducted a descriptive study about teachers' beliefs about the efficacy of integrating self-assessment in promoting learning. The findings indicated that teachers believed that self-assessment stimulated learners' motivation and involvement in the learning process, it raises students' awareness of their strengths and it helps them see their progress and give them greater ownership. Likewise, Chalkia (2012) implemented another qualitative study that focuses on self-

assessment as an alternative way to assess speaking skills of foreign language learners. The results revealed that the participants showed positive attitudes towards using self-assessment since it is a worthwhile activity as it fostered motivation and sensitized students to take a more active role in the learning process. It also increased their self-esteem and confidence in speaking assignments and enabled them to notice their strengths and weaknesses, thereby improving their speaking skills. Another descriptive study conducted by Ibberson (2012) to investigate both teachers' and students' attitudes towards using self-assessment through a structured questionnaire and follow-up interview were used as data collection tools and data was analyzed through SPSS. Results showed that both teachers and students found self-assessment useful, and had positive attitudes towards it. Belachew et al. (2015) also conducted an investigative study about the perception and practice of self-assessment in the EFL context. They found that (a) both EFL teachers and students had positive attitudes toward self-assessment, (b) teachers felt that their students do not assess themselves genuinely, (c) the majority of teachers did not have any experience of using self-assessment in the classroom even though they are familiar with the theoretical aspect, (d) majority of students tended to overrate their written performance compared to what they actually deserve, (e) experience, practice, sufficient training and clear guidelines are necessary for self-assessment to be effective (Belachew, Getinet, & Gashaye, 2015). In his descriptive study, Singh (2015) contends that verbal skills are ignored when it comes to assessment and having good grades in reading and writing skills does not necessarily mean having good performances in speaking skills. To this end, he conducted a study to find out which guidelines would be beneficial for students to assess their own speaking skills. The findings revealed that there were differences between students' self-assessments and teachers' assessments. The students overrated their oral performances when compared to their teachers'. Similarly, Marzuki et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study to investigate EFL students' perceptions of implementing self-assessment for assessing their oral performances. The findings showed that most learners did believe that using self-assessment was an advantageous tool that helped them improve their functionality to accomplish the oral expression course objectives, increased their motivation and improve their interaction with their teachers (Marzuki, Alek, Farkhan, Deni, & Raharjo, 2020). Last but not least, Masruria & Anam (2021) carried out a qualitative study to explore the beneficial value of self-assessment for assessing EFL High School students. The findings indicated that most students had positive attitudes towards using self-assessment as it enabled them to be cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses as well as improved communication with their teacher. Furthermore, the findings showed that self-assessment reinforced students' self-efficacy, self-regulation, and engagement in the learning process.

In light of the aforementioned studies, the findings divulged that self-assessment of speaking skill did enhance EFL learners' oral abilities, motivation, self-confidence, self-monitoring, and self-regulation of their own learning process. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been no descriptive study conducted in the Algerian EFL/ ESP context to investigate how self-assessment activity could be integrated to improve EP students' speaking skill during the whole academic year 2021/2022 in the department of physics, Higher Normal School of Bechar.

2- Method:

The researcher adopted a descriptive qualitative method in which she was an active observer herself during English for Physics sessions. Thus, the ultimate goal of this qualitative study is to provide rich, descriptive data about what happened in the English for Physics classroom.

3.1- Participants

The sample recruited for this study was third-year students of Physics (n=13), Department of Physics, Higher Normal School of Bechar, during the whole academic year 2021/2022. The sampling technique used by the researcher was convenience sampling. It is a format of non-probability sampling techniques in which the researcher chooses subjects for inclusion in the sample since they are available and accessible.

3.2- Gathering Data Tools

The study at hand was conducted through classroom observation and field notes. These data collection instruments were used to find out the merits of integrating self-assessment in the ESP context, and thus optimizing physics students' English speaking skill. As far as classroom observation and field notes are concerned, the teacher-researcher took notes and jotted down the most significant learning behaviors and reactions through which physics students seemed to progress and bolster their oral performance. These classroom observations and field notes were not predetermined by the researcher, but only reflected what happened during the English for Physics course.

3.3- Procedure

As mentioned earlier, the teacher-researcher adopted classroom observation and field notes to collect the main data for this qualitative study. Thus, the researcher observed the implementation of self-assessment activities in English for Physics classroom. She basically relied on an unstructured-observation grid to observe the process of oral presentations performed by physics students. The teacher researcher, as an active observer, noticed the implementation of self-assessment in the classroom by jotting notes down.

By conducting self-assessment of physics students' oral presentations, the teacher-researcher provided her students with two training-sessions before the actual implementation of self-assessment. This helped them observe the teacher model how to assess her students and what speaking proficiency criteria she adopted. As a result, students were well-prepared and ready for judging and measuring their own oral performance, following these procedures for the effectuation of the self-assessment process as follows:

a. Pre-implementation of Self-assessment:

- Modeling and demonstrating the process of self-assessment in two training-sessions;
- Preparing self-assessment scoring rubrics with learners before their actual implementation;
- Administering speaking skill scoring rubrics amongst physics students along with explaining and illustrating their use to assess their own recorded oral presentations later on.
- The teacher-researcher provided her learners with the necessary guidelines, elucidated the main purposes of the self-assessment activity and overall course objectives as well as discussed any potential problems.

b. While-implementation of Self-assessment:

- EP students recorded their oral-presentations to self-assess them later on.
- EP students self-assessed their oral performance as explained by the teacher researcher, and that they were asked to determine scores for each speaking skill criterion, namely vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, fluency and content;
- EP students made use of numerical "***I can do***" scoring rubrics (from 1 to 20) to self-assess their oral output;
- The teacher-researcher carefully monitored, facilitated, and guided their students' self-assessment activity throughout all phases;
- EP students received different forms of scaffolding and awareness-raising during the process of self-assessment;
- EP students used "***I can do***" checklists to assess their oral presentation performance.
- EP students reflected on their oral performances and self-assessments according to the given scoring rubrics and set their goals for the next oral presentations;
- The teacher-researcher also took notes and jotted down the main observations that were concerned with her students' oral output during the EP session;
- The teacher-researcher gave appropriate feedback while students were taking notes to be ready for the *Harkness table* later on;

- At the end of the activity, the teacher researcher collected students' self-assessments to compare them with her own scores.

c. Post-implementation of Self-assessment:

- Gathering speaking skill scoring rubrics of each student to be analyzed by the teacher researcher;
- Recording and comparing speaking skill rubric scores for each oral presenter and identifying the mean score of self-assessment which ranges from (Excellent =16-20) to (poor =1-4);
- Returning scoring rubrics to the previous week's oral presenters to reflect and think critically about their performance.
- Discussing the main weaknesses and strengths of each oral presenter;
- The teacher-researcher and all participants done a panel table to discuss the main challenges they confronted during their self-assessments;
- The teacher-researcher tried to remind her students to take into account the pre-set goals for reaching their next sessions.

In a nutshell, the implementation of self-assessment activity requires instructing physics students to understand this alternative method of assessment. Thus, EP students were trained to fill in the scoring rubrics of self-assessment administered to each participant. After that, the scoring rubrics were gathered by the teacher researcher to compare EP students' self-assessments and their teacher's ones in order to calculate the mean scores of each oral presenter. Finally, the scoring rubrics were returned to each oral presenter to think critically about his/ her learning process.

3- Results and Discussion

In light of classroom observation and field notes, the teacher researcher observed students in action. That is, she noticed how EP students perform self-assessment activities to assess their own oral presentations, thereby bolstering their speaking skills. First of all, they were actively involved in the learning process, and hence became more autonomous learners. They were able to reflect on their own oral performances and arrive at a better understanding of how they learned. Add to this, the process of self-assessment involves students in making judgments of their own learning. Thus, they became more cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses and improved their speaking skill. Moreover, during the EP course, students learn to be responsible, autonomous and focus on the learning process *per se*. Self-assessment enabled EP students to learn about learning, thereby increasing their meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking skills about their own learning. It, ergo, raises their awareness of the learning process, fosters their higher-order thinking

skills, and that enhancing their self-direction and self-management of their academic goals.

Self-assessment also provided physics students with an opportunity to experience the role of their teachers and understand the nature of the assessment process by giving them some in-depth insights into the assessment process. In other words, they developed their critical thinking skills since they were engaged in the process of judging their own academic achievement, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and enabling them better reflect on their own oral performance and rethink their learning process.

Most importantly, self-assessment activity gave EP students a chance to be deeply involved in the learning process. It helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses and helps them take charge of their own learning and self-monitoring their oral proficiency performance. It triggers their meta-cognitive awareness in which they take an outside perspective on their learning process and increases their problem-solving skills. Self-assessment helps learners to identify their needs and expectations as well as their interaction with the methods and materials used by their instructor.

As far as the affective factors are concerned, EP students enjoyed the implementation of self-assessment and they contended that they feel more comfortable, self-confident and enthusiastic when they self-assessed their own oral presentations instead of their instructor. As a consequence, self-assessment as an alternative method established a low-anxious and less-stressful environment in which they were more productive and interactive agents in the learning process. It fostered their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and sensitized the students to take a more active role in the learning process. Students also found the self-assessment scoring rubric of speaking skill beneficial as it provided them with a useful guide and focused on specific aspects of speaking proficiency when they assess their own oral performance.

Moreover, self-assessment increased cooperative learning among learners and helped them learn from their classmates' strengths and weaknesses as well as sharing the assessment burden with their instructor. It encourages students to reflect on their roles and contribution to the process of teamwork. In self-assessment the students were engaged in collaborative work with their teacher and can show the qualities of leadership. This enabled them to open their eyes and clearly understand the process of assessment, hence self-directing and self-regulating their own learning process. To recapitulate, self-assessment bolsters physics students' critical thinking, judgment, creativeness, initiative, interpretative skills, hypothesis formulation and problem-solving competencies.

The current findings were in accordance with previous studies (Chalkia, 2012; Shahrakipour, 2014; Karakaya, 2017; Marzuki et al., 2020) in which EP students felt that they become more critical, work in a more structured way and think more deeply. Consequently, self-assessment accords with the paradigm shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness in which the learner is responsible for his/ her own learning as it boosts lifelong and active learning, learner autonomy and critical thinking skills.

4- Conclusion

Above all, self-assessment is an alternative assessment method to be used in the EFL/ ESP context that facilitates active learning, learner autonomy and higher-order thinking skills which are conducive to the enhancement of language competency in general and speaking proficiency in particular. However, this effective strategy was not adopted by most EFL/ ESP instructors despite its beneficial values, such as involving learners in the learning process, fostering learners' self-regulation and self-monitoring, develop their critical thinking skills as well as meta-cognitive and problem-solving strategies. It can be concluded that this process allowed EP students to self-monitor and reflect on their oral performances, thereby enabling them to set realistic goals that are directly related to their academic achievement while allowing them to take charge of their own learning, thereby bolstering their speaking skill in terms of the five criteria, namely vocabulary, accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and content.

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