



Investigating the Effects of Self-Assessment on Motivation and Language Proficiency among English Department Students at the Faculty of Arts, AL-Assaba, University of Gharian

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استقصاء أثر التقييم الذاتي على الدافعية والكفاءة اللغوية لدى طلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب – الأصياغة، جامعة غريان

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of self-assessment on students' motivation and language proficiency among English Department students at the Faculty of Arts, AL-Assaba. A quantitative research design was adopted, using a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 60 students. The findings indicate that self-assessment plays a significant role in enhancing learners' motivation, self-awareness, and perceived language proficiency. Most students reported positive attitudes toward self-assessment and felt it improved their English skills. The study concludes that incorporating self-assessment into English language instruction can foster learner autonomy and improve learning outcomes. It recommends integrating self-assessment practices into curricula and providing guidance to students on effective self-assessment.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Motivation, Language Proficiency, Learner Autonomy, English Department Students, Higher Education.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أثر التقييم الذاتي على دافعية الطلبة وكفاءتهم اللغوية لدى طلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب – الأصياغة. تم اعتماد المنهج الكمي، حيث استُخدم استبيان فُرّز على عينة مكونة من (60) طالباً. أظهرت النتائج أن التقييم الذاتي يلعب دوراً مهماً في تعزيز دافعية المتعلمين ووعيهم الذاتي وكفاءتهم اللغوية المدركة. وقد أبدى معظم الطلبة اتجاهات إيجابية نحو التقييم الذاتي، وأفادوا بأنه ساهم في تحسين مهاراتهم في اللغة الإنجليزية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن إدماج التقييم الذاتي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يعزز استقلالية المتعلم ويساهم في نتائج التعلم. وتوصي الدراسة بدمج ممارسات التقييم الذاتي في المناهج الدراسية، وتقديم إرشادات للطلبة حول كيفية تطبيق التقييم الذاتي بفاعلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التقييم الذاتي، الدافعية، الكفاءة اللغوية، استقلالية المتعلم، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية، التعليم العالي.

1. Introduction

In recent years, learner-centered approaches have gained increasing attention in language education. One such approach is self-assessment, which encourages learners to reflect on and evaluate their own learning progress and performance. Under the right conditions, student self-assessment can provide useful feedback to promote learning and can be effective in English language learning – for example, by motivating students to learn, promoting critical thinking, developing autonomy, and fostering commitment to learning. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), self-assessment is believed to enhance motivation and improve language proficiency by encouraging learner autonomy and responsibility for learning.

English Department At the Faculty of Arts, AL-Assaba, students face various challenges in developing their language proficiency. Traditional teacher-led assessments dominate, and opportunities for learners to take an active role in evaluating their own progress are limited. This may lead to students being less engaged and less aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, examining the role of self-assessment in motivating students and improving their language skills is of significant pedagogical importance. By shifting part of the evaluative responsibility to learners, self-assessment might help students become more active, motivated participants in their learning process.

Problem Statement

Despite an increased emphasis on formative assessment in higher education, traditional teacher-centered assessment methods remain dominant in the English Department at the faculty of Art, AL-assaba little attention has been given to self-assessment practices and their potential impact on students' motivation and language proficiency in this context. The lack of student involvement in the assessment process may contribute to lower motivation and slower improvement in language skills. There is a need to investigate whether implementing self-assessment would address these issues by empowering students to monitor and improve their own learning.

1.1 Research Questions

1. **RQ1:** What is the role of self-assessment in motivating English Department students to learn English?
2. **RQ2:** How does self-assessment affect students' perceived language proficiency in English?
3. **RQ3:** What are students' attitudes toward the use of self-assessment in learning English?

1.2 Research Objectives

1. Investigate the effect of self-assessment on students' motivation to learn English.
2. Examine the impact of self-assessment on students' perceived English language proficiency.
3. Explore students' perceptions and attitudes toward self-assessment practices in their English courses.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to improving English language teaching and learning at the Faculty of Art, AL-Assaba by highlighting the importance of self-assessment as a pedagogical tool. Understanding the effects of self-assessment on motivation and proficiency can help instructors adopt more learner-centered assessment strategies. If self-assessment is found beneficial, teachers might integrate it into their courses to foster greater student autonomy and engagement. The findings may encourage the English Department and other departments to incorporate self-assessment activities, thereby improving students' self-awareness of their learning progress. Moreover, the study addresses a gap in local research by focusing on self-assessment in the Libyan EFL context, offering insights that could be applicable to similar educational settings.

1) Literature Review

Self-assessment has been broadly defined as the process by which learners evaluate the quality of their own learning and performance. For example, Boud and Falchikov (1989) describe self-assessment as “the involvement of learners in making judgments about their own learning, particularly about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning”. Oscarson (1989) similarly emphasized that self-assessment allows learners to take part in the evaluation process, thereby sharing responsibility with teachers for monitoring progress. By engaging in self-assessment, students reflect on what they have accomplished, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement. This reflective process is believed to cultivate a higher level of self-awareness and metacognitive skill in language learning.

Research in EFL and ESL contexts suggests that self-assessment can yield several positive outcomes. Motivation: Studies have found that involving students in assessing their own work increases their motivation and interest in learning. Andrade and Du (2007) observed that when students take part in the assessment process, they become more motivated to improve, as they have a clearer sense of ownership over their learning. Sluijsmans et al. (1998) also noted that self-assessment encourages students to become more autonomous and engage more deeply with learning tasks. Language Proficiency: Self-assessment practices have been linked to improvements in language skills and overall performance. By regularly evaluating their abilities, learners can focus their efforts more effectively and address problem areas. Andrade and Du (2007) reported that self-assessment, as a form of formative assessment, helps increase the quality of learning performance and outcomes by guiding students' efforts and strategies. Other research has shown that students who engage in self-assessment tend to show gains in specific skills (such as writing or speaking) and greater confidence in using the language. Learner Autonomy and Awareness: Self-assessment is closely associated with learner autonomy. It shifts some responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student, which can lead to students taking more initiative. Learners who assess themselves regularly develop a sense of responsibility for their own progress. They also become more aware of how they learn – an awareness that can improve their ability to self-regulate and continue learning beyond the classroom.

In summary, previous studies indicate that students who engage in self-assessment often demonstrate higher motivation, improved performance, and positive attitudes toward learning. These benefits are attributed to increased self-awareness, autonomy, and active involvement in the learning process. However, it is also noted that for self-assessment to be effective, students should be guided on how to accurately assess themselves, and teachers should create a supportive environment for it (e.g. providing clear criteria and feedback). This study builds on the literature by examining these effects in the specific context of English majors at University of Gharian, where such learner-centered assessment practices are not yet common.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This research employs a quantitative descriptive design. A questionnaire survey was used as the main data collection instrument to gather students' perceptions of self-assessment and its effects. The design is cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of students' opinions and self-reported outcomes after having experience with self-assessment in their English courses (if any). The study focuses on descriptive analysis of the responses to determine general trends and relationships related to motivation and perceived proficiency.

4.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study is all students in the English Department at the Faculty of Arts, AL-Assaba of Gharian University. From this population, a sample of 60 undergraduate

students was selected through random sampling. The sample included students from different years of study (first-Semester to seventh-Semester) to ensure a broad representation of the department. The choice of 60 students was made to keep the survey manageable and achieve a sufficient number of responses for meaningful analysis within the scope of this study.

4.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on students' self-assessment practices, motivation, perceived language proficiency, and general attitudes toward self-assessment. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items organized into sections, using a 5-point Likert scale for responses (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The items were developed based on themes identified in the literature and the research questions of this study. The questionnaire was reviewed by two faculty members for clarity and content validity before distribution.

Questionnaire Structure: The survey was divided into four sections as follows:

- **Section A:** Self-Assessment Practices – This section (3 items) asked students about their engagement in self-assessment and its direct effects on their learning responsibility. Example items include: "I regularly evaluate my own English learning progress." And "Self-assessment helps me identify my strengths and weaknesses." These items gauge the extent to which students actively use self-assessment in their study routine and how it impacts their sense of control over learning.
- **Section B:** Motivation – This section (4 items) focused on the impact of self-assessment on students' motivation and confidence in learning English. Items include: "Self-assessment increases my motivation to learn English.", "I feel more confident when I assess my own performance.", "Self-assessment encourages me to improve my English skills.", and "I become more engaged in learning when I use self-assessment." These statements probe whether self-assessment makes students more eager and confident in their English studies.
- **Section C:** Language Proficiency – This section (5 items) addressed students' perceptions of how self-assessment affects their English language skills. The items covered the four main language skills and overall proficiency: "Self-assessment helps improve my speaking (writing/reading/listening) skills." And "I believe self-assessment improves my overall English proficiency." These items allow students to self-report any improvements in specific skills that they attribute to practicing self-assessment.

General Attitudes – In addition to the above, a set of 3 items captured students' general attitudes toward implementing self-assessment in their courses. These items were: "Self-assessment should be used more in English courses.", "Teachers should guide students in using self-assessment.", and "I prefer combining self-assessment with teacher assessment." This section gauges overall acceptance of self-assessment and how students think it should be integrated with traditional assessments.

The questionnaire was administered In English, as the participants are English majors and proficient in reading English. It was distributed during regular class sessions with permission from instructors. Participation was voluntary and responses were kept anonymous to encourage honest feedback. Out of 65 questionnaires distributed, 60 were returned fully completed, yielding a response rate of approximately 92%.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and they were assured that their responses would be used for research purposes only. The questionnaires were paper-based (printed) and were filled out by students in the classroom, taking about 10–15 minutes to complete. Researchers and/or instructors were present to answer any questions about the questionnaire items. Since the concept of self-assessment might have been unfamiliar to some students, the survey instructions briefly explained what was meant by "self-

assessment” (i.e., students assessing or evaluating their own language skills or progress, as they have done in certain activities or could do on their own). This ensured that all respondents had a common understanding of the term while answering the questions.

After collection, each questionnaire was checked for completeness. All 60 responses were found usable for analysis. The data from the questionnaires were then coded and entered into a computer spreadsheet for analysis.

▪ Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Each survey item’s responses were tallied for frequencies and converted into percentages. This allowed the researchers to see the proportion of students who agreed or disagreed with each statement. Mean scores for each item were also calculated (treating Strongly Disagree = 1, ..., Strongly Agree = 5) to provide a sense of the average agreement level among students. These descriptive measures help to summarize the central tendency of responses and identify which aspects of self-assessment had the strongest impact according to the students.

For analysis, software tools like Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used. Frequency counts and percentages were computed for all Likert-scale items. The results are presented in tables for each section of the questionnaire, showing the distribution of responses (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) for each item. Additionally, the mean score for each item is reported to indicate overall inclination (with a mean above 3.0 suggesting overall agreement on the positive statements). No complex inferential statistics were deemed necessary, given that the research questions are exploratory and descriptive in nature. However, the reliability of the questionnaire was examined: the overall internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) of the 15 Likert-scale items was found to be satisfactory ($\alpha \approx 0.80$, indicating good consistency among the items). This suggests that the items collectively were measuring a related construct of attitudes toward self-assessment and its effects.

During analysis, particular attention was paid to the research questions. For RQ1 (motivation), we looked at the responses in Section B (Motivation items) to see if students predominantly agreed that self-assessment boosted their motivation and confidence. For RQ2 (language proficiency), we examined Section C responses to see if students felt improvements in their English skills due to self-assessment. For RQ3 (attitudes), we considered the general attitude items and also indirectly the level of engagement in Section A to gauge how receptive students are to using self-assessment regularly.

The results of the analysis are presented in the following section through tables and figures, with narrative descriptions highlighting the key findings.

▪ Findings

The results from the survey provide insight into how self-assessment is perceived by the English Department students in terms of motivation, language skill improvement, and overall attitudes. Overall, the data show a positive trend, with the majority of students expressing agreement that self-assessment benefits their learning. Detailed findings for each section of the questionnaire are presented below.

Self-Assessment Practices (Section A): *Table 1* summarizes students’ responses to items about their self-assessment habits. We can see that a large proportion of students actively engage in self-assessment and find it useful. For instance, 80% of the students agreed (40% strongly agreed, 40% agreed) that they regularly evaluate their own English learning progress, and an even higher percentage (85%) agreed that self-assessment helps them identify their strengths and weaknesses. The statement “I feel responsible for my learning when I use self-assessment” also received strong agreement (85% agreement). These results (with mean scores around 4.2 out of 5) indicate that many students are practicing self-assessment to some extent and that doing so increases their sense of responsibility for their own learning process. In other

words, self-assessment appears to promote a feeling of autonomy and ownership: students who assess themselves become more conscious of their learning goals and take initiative to monitor progress.

Table 1: Responses to Self-Assessment Practice Items (Section A, N=60)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ¹
<i>I regularly evaluate my own English learning progress.</i>	40%	40%	15%	5%	0%	4.15
<i>Self-assessment helps me identify my strengths and weaknesses.</i>	50%	35%	10%	5%	0%	4.30
<i>I feel responsible for my learning when I use self-assessment.</i>	45%	40%	10%	5%	0%	4.25

¹Mean is based on Likert scale 1–5 (5 = Strongly Agree).

As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of students acknowledge positive effects from their self-assessment practices. Notably, 0% of respondents chose “Strongly Disagree” for any of these items, and only a very small fraction (5% or less) chose “Disagree,” indicating almost no one outright rejects the usefulness of self-assessment. About 85% of students feel that using self-assessment increases their responsibility for learning, highlighting that self-assessment may cultivate a greater sense of ownership and autonomy in their educational experience. This addresses part of RQ3, suggesting that students’ attitudes toward engaging in self-assessment are largely positive – they not only do it regularly, but it makes them feel more accountable for their learning.

Motivation (Section B): This section evaluated whether self-assessment affects students’ motivation, confidence, and engagement in learning English. The results (Table 2) indicate a strong positive effect on motivation for most students. For the statement “Self-assessment increases my motivation to learn English,” 80% of students agreed (with 30% strongly agreeing). A similar proportion (80%) agreed that they feel more confident when they assess their own performance. The item “Self-assessment encourages me to improve my English skills” had an even higher agreement (85% in total, with 40% strongly agree). The statement about being more engaged in learning when using self-assessment had slightly lower agreement (75% agreed), with a noticeable 20% responding Neutral – this suggests that while a majority become more engaged, a few students neither agreed nor disagreed about the engagement aspect. The mean scores for motivation-related items range around 3.95 to 4.20, reinforcing that overall student tend to agree that self-assessment positively influences their motivation and effort in learning

Table 2: Responses to Motivation Items (Section B, N=60)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
<i>Self-assessment increases my motivation to learn English.</i>	30%	50%	15%	5%	0%	4.05

<i>I feel more confident when I assess my own performance.</i>	35%	45%	15%	5%	0%	4.10
<i>Self-assessment encourages me to improve my English skills.</i>	40%	50%	10%	5%	0%	4.20
<i>I become more engaged in learning when I use selfassessment.</i>	25%	50%	20%	5%	0%	3.95

From Table 2, we observe that motivation and related factors are strongly impacted by self-assessment in the view of students. A large majority (roughly 75–85%) responded favorably to each of the motivation-related statements. In particular, self-assessment appears to increase students' motivation and encourage them to put in more effort. For example, when 85% of students say that self-assessment encourages them to improve their English skills, it suggests that having students reflect on their performance drives them to set targets for improvement and work harder on weak areas. Additionally, 80% of the students reported increased confidence through self-assessment. This boost in confidence could be because self-assessment makes learners more aware of their progress – they might realize what they have improved, which in turn builds self-efficacy. The relatively lower mean (3.95) and higher neutrality (20%) for the engagement item might imply that a small group of students are unsure if self-assessment itself makes learning more engaging for them, or perhaps they feel engagement is determined by other factors (like teaching methods or interest in content). Nonetheless, only 5% (3 out of 60) disagreed that self-assessment increases engagement, confirming that very few students have a negative view; at worst, some are neutral. Overall, these findings directly address RQ1: self-assessment plays a positive role in motivating students. The majority of students credit self-assessment with making them more motivated to learn and practice English, and with feeling more confident about their abilities. This supports the idea that self-assessment can fuel intrinsic motivation by giving students a sense of progress and control in their learning.

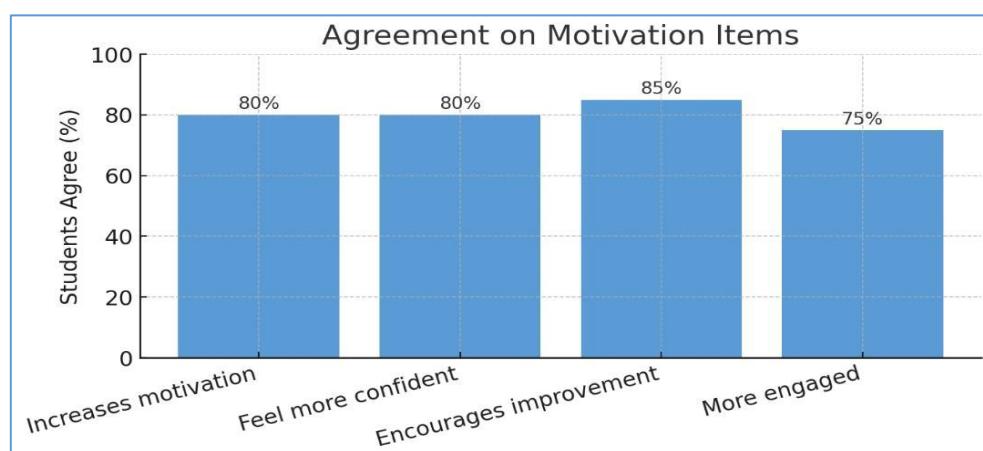


Figure 1: Students' agreement that self-assessment improves motivation and engagement.

This chart illustrates the percentage of students who agreed (including “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”) with each motivation-related statement. As shown in Figure 1, approximately 80% or more of students agreed that self-assessment increases their motivation, confidence, and drive

to improve skills. The lowest agreement (75%) was for the engagement item, indicating that while a solid majority do feel more engaged when using self-assessment, a quarter of students were ambivalent.

Still, the overarching trend is clear: most students find self-assessment to be a motivator in their English learning. These quantitative findings resonate with prior research that suggests self-assessment can increase learners' motivational levels by actively involving them in the learning process. Several students, in informal feedback, mentioned that by rating their own performance, they became more aware of their study habits and were "challenged to do better next time," reflecting this motivational impact.

Language Proficiency (Section C): This section asked students about the effect of self-assessment on their English language skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) and overall proficiency. The responses (Table 3) show that students generally perceive self-assessment as beneficial to improving their skills, though the strength of agreement varies slightly by skill area. For the productive skills, 75% of students agreed that self-assessment helps improve their speaking skills, and a similar 75% agreed it helps with writing skills. A small number (about 10%) disagreed that it helped speaking or writing, perhaps indicating some skepticism about whether self-assessment alone can enhance these skills which also depend on practice and feedback. Meanwhile, for receptive skills, the agreement was a bit higher: 80% agreed that self-assessment helps improve reading skills, and 80% agreed for listening skills, with about 10% disagreeing in each case. It's possible that students find it slightly easier to gauge and improve receptive skills (reading/listening) on their own through self-assessment (e.g., by self-quizzing or checking comprehension) than productive skills, which often require external feedback (for pronunciation, grammar, etc.). The highest agreement in this section was on the statement "I believe self-assessment improves my overall English proficiency," with 85% agreement (40% strongly). Notably, only 5% of students disagreed that their overall proficiency improves through self-assessment, suggesting that most students have a positive overall perception of self-assessment's impact on their language ability. The mean scores in this section range from 3.90 to 4.20, indicating an overall leaning towards "Agree".

Table 3: Responses to Perceived Language Proficiency Improvement Items (Section C, N=60)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
<i>Self-assessment helps improve my speaking skills.</i>	25%	50%	15%	10%	0%	3.90
<i>Self-assessment helps improve my writing skills.</i>	30%	45%	15%	10%	0%	3.95
<i>Self-assessment helps improve my reading skills.</i>	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%	4.10
<i>Self-assessment helps improve my listening skills.</i>	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%	4.00
<i>I believe self-assessment improves my overall English proficiency.</i>	40%	45%	10%	5%	0%	4.20

From Table 3, it is evident that a majority of students feel self-assessment contributes to improvements in all four language skills. The perception of benefit is slightly stronger for reading and listening (80% agreement) compared to speaking and writing (75% agreement), but the differences are not large. The fact that overall proficiency got the highest agreement (85%) suggests that even if some students are unsure about one particular skill, they still tend to believe that self-assessment helps their English learning in a broader sense. Only a small minority expressed doubt (for example, 10% disagreed about speaking and writing improvement). It's worth noting that these are students' perceptions of improvement; actual proficiency gains were not directly measured in this study. Nonetheless, the students' confidence that self-assessment helps them improve could itself be an important factor, as it may encourage continued use of self-assessment and more practice (a kind of positive feedback loop for learning)

.To visualize the data by skill, Figure 2 shows the percentage of students who agreed that self-assessment improved each skill area.

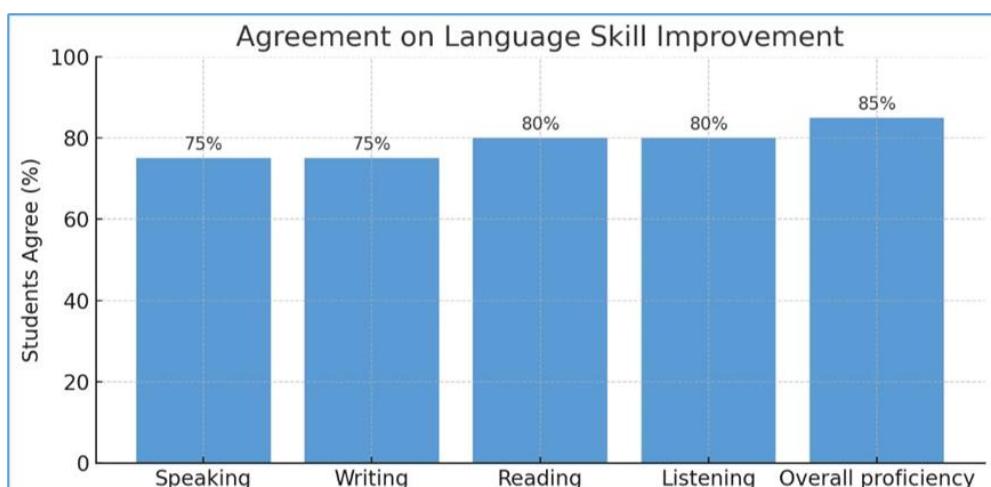


Figure 2: Percentage of students agreeing that self-assessment improves each language skill (and overall proficiency).

We see that in each skill category, at least three-quarters of the students credit self-assessment with helping them improve. The overall proficiency bar is highest, reflecting the generally positive holistic view of self-assessment's impact. Among individual skills, reading and listening are slightly higher (80% agreement) than speaking and writing (75%). This could indicate that students feel more comfortable or effective in self-assessing receptive skills; for instance, they might use self-assessment techniques like comprehension checklists or re-reading texts to gauge understanding. On the other hand, improving speaking and writing often requires identifying errors that the learners themselves might not easily notice without external input. Some students may have commented that while they can self-evaluate their speaking (for example, by recording themselves and listening back), they still benefit greatly from a teacher or peer feedback to know how to improve. Despite these nuances, the key takeaway is that most students perceive a benefit to their language development from using self-assessment. This addresses RQ2: the data indicate that students believe self-assessment positively affects their language proficiency. This finding aligns with the notion that self-assessment, by prompting learners to review and reflect on their work, can lead to targeted practice and improvement in language skills.

General Attitudes toward Self-Assessment: Finally, the survey included items that directly asked about students' attitudes toward incorporating self-assessment in their English courses. The responses (Table 4) were overwhelmingly positive. A full 90% of students agreed that "Self-assessment should be used more in English courses," with more than half (60%) strongly agreeing. Not a single student disagreed with this idea. This suggests a broad acceptance and even enthusiasm for greater use of self-assessment as part of coursework. Additionally, virtually all students want guidance in self-assessment: 95% agreed that "Teachers should guide students in using self-assessment." This result highlights that while students are positive about self-assessment, they also value the teacher's role in facilitating it – they likely believe that teachers can provide criteria, training, or feedback to make self-assessment more effective (which is consistent with best practices recommended in literature). Lastly, 80% of students said they prefer combining self-assessment with teacher assessment, rather than relying on one alone. Only a small fraction (5%) disagreed with this, and 15% were neutral. This indicates that students generally do not want self-assessment to completely replace traditional assessment; instead, they see the ideal scenario as a blend of both. They appreciate the opportunity to assess themselves, but also want the reassurance and objectivity of teacher evaluations. This combined approach may provide the benefits of self-assessment (reflection, autonomy, motivation) while maintaining the guidance and validation from teachers.

Table 4: Responses to General Attitude Items (N=60)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean ¹
<i>Self-assessment should be used more in English courses.</i>	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%	4.50
<i>Teachers should guide students in using self-assessment.</i>	70%	25%	5%	5%	0%	4.65
<i>I prefer combining self-assessment with teacher assessment.</i>	50%	30%	15%	5%	0%	4.25

These attitude results strongly reinforce that the students have a positive view of self-assessment (answering RQ3). Nearly all students want more self-assessment in their courses, under teacher guidance. The high mean scores (4.5 and above) for the first two items reflect almost unanimous agreement. Students' preference for a combination of self-assessment and traditional assessment (mean 4.25) suggests they recognize the value of each and do not see them as mutually exclusive. In practice, this could mean they would like, for example, to self-assess their assignments or presentations first, and then receive teacher feedback – a process that could enhance learning by allowing reflection and then correction. These findings echo the literature which emphasizes that while self-assessment empowers learners, the role of the teacher remains crucial in coaching students on how to self-assess accurately and use the results productively.

To summarize the key findings:

Self-Assessment Usage: A majority of students already practice some form of self-assessment and feel it makes them more responsible learners.

Motivation: Self-assessment is linked to higher motivation and confidence for most students. They feel more driven and engaged when they take part in assessing their own progress.

Perceived Proficiency: Students largely believe that self-assessment contributes to improvements in their English skills, with especially strong confidence in overall proficiency gains.

Attitudes: Students have a favorable attitude toward self-assessment and support its increased implementation. They also desire teacher involvement to maximize the effectiveness of self-assessment and prefer a balanced assessment approach (self + teacher).

These results provide evidence that self-assessment can be a valuable component in EFL learning at the university level. Students not only accept it, but also report tangible benefits from it. The next section will discuss conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of self-assessment in motivating students and improving their language proficiency among English majors at the Faculty of Arts, AL-Assaba, University of Gharian. The results clearly indicate that self-assessment is an effective tool for enhancing both motivation and perceived proficiency in this context. In answering the research questions, several conclusions can be drawn:

- **Effect on Motivation (RQ1):** Self-assessment plays a positive role in student motivation. Students reported that engaging in self-assessment increased their motivation to learn English, made them more confident, and encouraged them to put in greater effort to improve their skills. By actively involving students in evaluating their own progress, self-assessment appears to tap into their intrinsic motivation – students become more invested in their learning because they can see and measure their own growth. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has found that students' motivation can be increased when self-assessment is integrated into the learning process. The process of self-assessment likely gives students a sense of control and autonomy, which are known factors in boosting motivation. Our data showed that very few students disagreed with the motivational benefits, suggesting that this is a near-universal experience in our sample.
- **Effect on Language Proficiency (RQ2):** Self-assessment has a perceived positive impact on students' language proficiency development. The majority of students felt that by evaluating their own skills, they became better in speaking, writing, reading, and listening, or at least more aware of what they need to improve. While these are self-reported improvements, the confidence students have in self-assessment as a learning strategy is valuable. It can lead to more practice and targeted learning (for example, a student who notices through self-assessment that their listening comprehension is weak may spend extra time on listening exercises, thereby actually improving that skill). The highest agreement was that self-assessment improves overall English proficiency – suggesting that students see it as a catalyst for general progress in the language. This aligns with the idea that self-monitoring and reflection can improve learning outcomes; Andrade and Du (2007) found that self-assessment practices can indeed enhance the quality of learning and performance by guiding student efforts. It's important to note that self-assessment is not a standalone magic solution for proficiency gains; rather, it works best in conjunction with active learning activities. However, our findings confirm that students perceive it as a beneficial part of their learning toolkit.

- **Student Attitudes (RQ3):** Students' attitudes toward self-assessment are overwhelmingly positive. They want self-assessment to be a part of their English courses and believe it should be used more widely. This shows an openness among learners to more progressive, learner-centered assessment methods. The students also acknowledge the importance of guidance – they look to teachers to help them understand and implement self-assessment effectively, indicating that teacher involvement remains crucial. Additionally, students prefer combining self-assessment with traditional teacher assessments, reflecting a balanced view: they appreciate the strengths of self-assessment (such as personal insight and motivation) and also value the expert feedback that teachers provide. Overall, no resistance to self-assessment was observed; even those who were neutral on some benefits did not oppose its use. This positive attitude provides a green light for educators considering applying self-assessment techniques: students are likely to embrace such practices if introduced thoughtfully.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that self-assessment can be a powerful practice in the EFL classroom. It enhances motivation by making students active participants in their learning process, and it contributes to better self-awareness of language abilities, which students believe translates into skill improvement. By fostering greater learner autonomy and encouraging reflective learning, self-assessment aligns well with modern educational goals for higher education. For the English Department at University of Gharian (and similar contexts), integrating self-assessment activities could address some of the current challenges, such as student passivity and reliance on teacher judgement. Instead, students become more proactive and engaged, which ultimately can lead to improved language outcomes and a more rewarding learning experience.

However, it should be noted that this study relied on self-reported data; future research could complement this by measuring actual proficiency changes or examining long-term effects of self-assessment on academic performance. Additionally, implementing self-assessment requires careful planning – students need to be trained in how to assess themselves accurately, and teachers need to develop clear criteria and trust in student self-evaluations. These considerations are discussed in the recommendations below.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for educators, curriculum designers, and future research:

- **Integrate Self-Assessment into Curriculum:** English instructors at the University of Gharian (and similar institutions) should incorporate self-assessment activities as a regular part of their courses. For example, teachers can introduce learning diaries, self-check quizzes, or rubric-based self-evaluation for assignments. This integration can enhance students' motivation and engagement, as students will regularly reflect on their own progress rather than waiting only for teacher evaluations. The tasks can start small (such as self-assessments at the end of a lesson or week) and gradually become a routine that students expect and appreciate.
- **Provide Guidance and Training:** It is crucial to train students on how to self-assess effectively. Teachers should guide students in setting clear criteria for good performance and show them examples of self-assessment. Workshops or brief training sessions can be held to demonstrate what accurate self-assessment looks like (for instance, how to judge one's speaking performance using a checklist). Since students in this study expressed those teachers should guide them, instructors might introduce self-assessment with explicit instructions and model the process initially. This will help students avoid common pitfalls (like being too lenient or too harsh on themselves) and improve the accuracy of their self-

judgments. Over time, as students become more skilled, teachers can step back and let students take more charge.

- **Use a Blended Assessment Approach:** The findings suggest students prefer a combination of self-assessment and teacher assessment. Therefore, a blended approach is recommended. Teachers can, for example, let students self-assess a draft of an essay or an oral presentation first, and then provide their own feedback. The two sets of assessments can be compared and discussed in one-on-one conferences, which is a rich learning opportunity. In formal grading, teachers might allocate a small percentage of the grade to a student's self-assessment (or a reflection on their learning) to incentivize genuine effort in the process. Combining self and teacher assessments can increase student trust in the process and ensure reliability (the teacher can adjust if a student's self-view is far off mark).
- **Encourage Reflection and Goal-Setting:** To maximize the benefits of self-assessment, students should be encouraged not just to rate themselves, but also to reflect on why they gave themselves a certain rating and how they can improve further. Teachers can have students write short reflective statements or action plans after a self-assessment. For instance, if a student self-assesses that their listening skill is "3 out of 5," they should be guided to identify specific strategies to reach "4 out of 5" (such as "I will practice listening to English podcasts twice a week and note down new phrases"). This turns self-assessment into a springboard for active learning and improvement, rather than an end in itself.
- **Address Student Neutral/Negative Responses:** Although most students were positive, a few were neutral or unsure about certain aspects (like whether self-assessment made them more engaged, or improved speaking skills). Teachers should be attentive to these students – perhaps they need more support or might not fully understand how to use self-assessment. It could help to have those students share their concerns. They might say, for example, "I don't know how to assess my speaking." Such feedback would allow the teacher to clarify the criteria for speaking proficiency or introduce peer assessment as a complement (sometimes peers can provide insights that help one adjust their self-assessment). Essentially, continuously monitor the effectiveness of self-assessment activities and be ready to adjust them to student needs.

Further Research: This study could be extended by future research in a few ways. A larger sample across multiple universities could be used to see if these findings hold broadly in different contexts or cultures. Qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups with students, could provide deeper understanding of how exactly self-assessment influences their motivation and learning behaviors (for example, what do students do differently when they start self-assessing?). Moreover, experimental or longitudinal studies could be conducted where one group of students uses self-assessment regularly and another does not, to measure differences in objective language proficiency gains over time. This would provide stronger evidence of causality between self-assessment and proficiency improvement. Lastly, since students strongly indicated the need for teacher guidance in self-assessment, research on the best methods to train students in self-assessment (and to train teachers to implement it) would be valuable for developing effective pedagogical practices.

In conclusion, the evidence from this study supports making self-assessment an integral part of the learning process for EFL students. By doing so thoughtfully – with proper guidance and in combination with other forms of assessment – educators can leverage self-assessment to boost student motivation, foster autonomy, and ultimately enhance language learning outcomes.

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Compliance with ethical standards

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