

On the effectiveness of three types of assessment on EFL learners' self-regulation

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Abstract: The present study was conducted to investigate the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on EFL learners' self-regulation. The participants were 94 male and female Iranian EFL learners at IT English language institute in Qazvin. The instruments included a 55-item Preliminary English Test (PET) and the Persian translation of a 32-item self-regulation questionnaire. The participants were randomly assigned to three groups, and each group received one of the treatment conditions (self, peer, and teacher-assessment). They were also given the questionnaire twice, once before the treatment and once after it. The collected data were analyzed using the ANCOVA procedure. The results of the study showed no significant differences among the effects of the three types of assessment on self-regulation. The findings of this study may have theoretical and pedagogical implications for learners, teachers and syllabus designers.

Key words: Self- assessment; Peer- assessment; Teacher-assessment; Self-regulation

1. Introduction

Among learners' personality traits, self-efficacy beliefs have received considerable attention (Bandura, 1986 - 1989; Pintrich and Schunk, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). According to Zimmerman (2000), Albert Bandura, a cognitive psychologist, in 1977, introduced self-efficacy for the first time and viewed it as individuals' beliefs of their own competence to do an activity. Over the past few decades, there has been a major shift from teacher-centered learning strategy use to learner-centered learning strategy use in EFL educational systems (Reiss, 1985; Tamada, 1996).

A number of researchers have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy components (self-regulation, goal-orientation, and achievement motivation) and educational performance. Self-regulation is a concept that refers to learners' purposeful and active participation in their own learning processes. Zimmerman (1986) claims that self-regulated learners can use their metacognition purposefully to improve their own motivation in an active manner in their road to learning. Self-regulation may be influenced by a number of factors. One of the factors, which is of interest in the present study, is the type of assessment.

Assessment has various types including self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher-assessment. Boud (1995) refers to self-assessment as learners' reflection on their own work and evaluation of their own performance against the assigned criteria. Falchikov (1995) refers to peer-assessment as learners' reflection on their

classmates' work against the assigned criteria. Brown and Hudson, (1998) refer to teacher-assessment as the traditional and formal system in which teachers take the responsibility for assessing students' performance.

There have been several studies investigating the effects of different types of self-efficacy such as self-regulation, goal-orientation, and achievement motivation on learners' performance (Bandura et al., 1996; 2001; McCarthy et al., 1985; Zimmerman et al., 1992), and the effects of self (Brown, 2005; Butler and Lee, 2010; Chen, 2008, Falchikov and Boud, 1989; Leach, 2012), peer (Cheng and Warren, 2005; Falchikov, 1995; Freeman, 1995), and teacher-assessment (Chacon, 2005; Hoy and Davis, 2006) on learners' performance. However, few studies have specifically investigated the relationship between self-regulation as psychological factor and different types of assessment (self, peer, and teacher-assessment) (Alfallay, 2004; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Thus, the main focus of the present study is on investigating the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on Iranian EFL Learners' self-regulation. More specifically, this study aims to find answer for the following research question:

Are there any significant differences among the effects of self, peer, and teacher assessment on Iranian EFL learners' self-regulation?

2. Literature review

2.1. Self-regulation

Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) state that self-regulation refers to learners' mind generating concepts which assist them in their feelings and

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activities towards completing desired educational goals. They investigated the effect of self-regulation on students' academic achievement in writing. The results of the study showed that both perceived academic self-evaluation and self-efficacy are influenced by self-regulation in writing.

Pintrich and De Groot (1990) studied the correlation between motivational orientation, self-regulated learning, and classroom academic performance. They hold that self-regulated learning includes three major components, including 1) cognitive strategies that help learners in learning, remembering, and understanding the subjects, 2) metacognitive strategies that are for planning, monitoring, and regulating them, and 3) learners' ability to manage and control their own effort in academic performance. The participants of this study were 173 seventh grade English and science students. They administered a self-report questionnaire including 56 items, which measured the students' self-efficacy, intrinsic value, test anxiety, self-regulation, and strategy use. Based on the results of the study, there appeared to be evidence in support of positive relationships between self-efficacy and intrinsic value and learners' cognitive performance. Furthermore, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and test anxiety played a significant role in predicting their performance. Moreover, although intrinsic value had a positive relationship with self-regulation and students' cognitive strategy use, it did not have any direct effect on their performance.

Samadi (2004) compared self-regulated learning strategies used by students and their parents through focusing on the role of gender in their achievement. The results of the study revealed that gender had no significant effect on their self-regulated learning strategies. Nevertheless, differences between the self-regulation of high and moderate achieving groups and low achieving ones were significant.

According to Baumister and vohs (2008), a self-regulated person is able to modify his/her behavior to improve quality to achieve some of the desired performances, goals, and purposes. They claim that self-regulation is one of the human characteristics that assist them in being flexible in performing and adapting learning.

Pintrich (2000) studied the relationship between goal-orientated and self-regulated learning. He categorized self-regulated learning into cognitive, metacognitive and resource management. He also believed that students with a high level of cognitive strategies could achieve deep-level comprehension. Meta-cognitive strategies and regulation strategies help students in planning, monitoring, and controlling their cognitive strategies. Moreover, students with high levels of resource- management strategy use can do the best in achieving their assigned goals.

In another study, Schraw, Crippen, and Hartley (2006) classified self-regulation into three categories including: cognition, metacognition, and motivation.

Cognitive self-regulation includes cognitive strategies, problem solving strategies, and critical thinking. According to Schraw et al. (2006), problem-solving strategies are typically more complex than cognitive strategies and help learners in achieving perception in deeper levels. Critical thinking includes different skills to identify information sources, to prove learners' credibility, and to consider learners' consistency in terms of their prior knowledge and to attain critical thinking based conclusions (Linn, 2000). As to critical thinking, Zarei and Haghgoo (2012) carried out a study on the relationship between critical thinking and second language grammatical and lexical knowledge. Using 150 male and female B.A. level EFL students, they concluded that the correlation between vocabulary and critical thinking and between grammar and critical thinking were not statistically significant.

According to Zimmerman (2002), self-regulated learners benefit from their proactive manner by being aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and they also have ability to change and improve their own potential mental abilities to attain assigned educational purposes. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) investigated the relationship between formative assessment and self-regulated learning. They concluded that by giving students assessment responsibility and a good understanding of setting goals for their own learning performance, they could improve their self-regulation, which would enhance their active performance in learning towards their achievement goals.

In another study, Zimmerman and Schunk (2007) asserted that learners' metacognitive strategy use and affective factors had significant effect on their performance. Zimmerman (2008) studied the relationship between self-regulation and motivation. He points out that "SRL[self-regulated learning] was viewed as proactive processes that students use to acquire academic skill, such as setting goals, selecting and deploying strategies, and self-monitoring one's effectiveness, rather than as a reactive event that happens to students due to impersonal forces"(P. 166-167). He further asserts that some of the alternate methods include computer traces, think-aloud protocols, diaries of studying, direct observation, and microanalysis methods. The results of the study showed a close relationship between self-regulation and motivation.

Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens, and Dochy (2009) investigated the relationship between perceived autonomy support and structure in the prediction of 256 self-regulated learning students. The results of the study showed a positive relationship between autonomy support and structure. They concluded that structure autonomy but not autonomy support had a significant effect on self-regulated learning; however, this effect needed structure and supported autonomy interaction. This interaction, they emphasized, suggested structure supports more self-regulated learning under situations of moderate and high autonomy support. They maintained that teachers were required to

provide help, instruction, and support of autonomy expectation, when they hoped their learners became self-evaluated to plan and think of their own learning activities.

Huang (2011) investigated two types of assessment including convergent assessment and divergent assessment to see whether they had any effect on learners' motivation and strategy use, especially self-regulation. The participants were 105 Taiwanese college freshman students with the same instructor in one listening and two speaking classes. All of the participants experienced both of the assessment types, and after each assessment, they were required to report their motivation and learning strategies. The results of the study showed that the participants with high levels of self-efficacy received better convergent assessment than divergent ones, and low score participants received divergent assessment better compared with the other. In addition, they reported that after controlling the participants' self-efficacy, their reaction was different in listening and speaking classes. Furthermore, they reported that the level of motivation and strategy use in the speaking class for divergent assessment was higher than convergent one, but the results were reversed in the listening class.

Farajollahi and Moenikia (2011) investigated the effect of computer-based learning on distance learners' self-regulated learning strategies. Data analysis showed that the computer-based students used higher self-regulated strategies in their performance than print-based students.

Zarei and Hatami (2012) investigated the relationship between self-regulated learning components including planning, self-checking, effort, planning and self-efficacy, and L2 vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The participants were 250 male and female university students majoring in English language translation, and English literature. The results of the study showed a significant relationship between reading and self-check and reading and effort, while the correlation between vocabulary and planning, as well as vocabulary and effort; vocabulary and self-efficacy; reading and planning; and reading and self-efficacy were not significant.

Zarei and Azin (2013) investigated the relationship between multiple intelligences and self-regulated learning components of 150 Iranian intermediate EFL university students. They administered McKenzie questionnaire to check the participants' intelligence profile, and motivated strategies questionnaire to determine their strategy use. They concluded that verbal and existential intelligences had significant effect on cognitive self-regulated learning, and visual and verbal intelligences made a major contribution to predicting metacognitive self-regulated learning. However, they added that there was a negative relationship between visual intelligence and metacognitive self-regulation.

In another study, Zarei and Gilanian (2014) examined the relationship between cognitive self-regulated learning and language learning strategies. The participants were 148 B.A. level English translation and English language teaching students. The finding showed that memory strategies played a significant role in predicting rehearsal self-regulated learning, and metacognitive and cognitive strategies could positively predict the organizational self-regulated learning. They also concluded that language learning strategies and cognitive self-regulated learning components had positive relationships.

2.2. Self, peer, and teacher-assessment

According to Boud and Falchikov, (1989); Boud, (1992); (1995) self-assessment is the technique by which students judge and give feedback on their own performance, which is aimed at improving students' active participation in classroom activities. Sluijsmans, Dochy, and Moerkerke (1999) studied ways of creating a learning environment by using self, peer and co-assessment. They concluded that setting criteria to evaluate students' performance is the most important dimension of self-, peer-, and co-assessment. Andrade and Du (2007) studied student responses to criterion-referenced self-assessment. The results of the study showed a high level of agreement among learners towards criterion-referenced self-assessment. Leach (2012) investigated the optional self-assessment using a form of criterion-referenced assessment to assess the participants' work. The study showed no significant difference between students' self-assessed and teacher-assessed grades.

Black and William (1998), Davies (2002) and Shepard (2000) claim that assessment, especially peer-assessment, inform students about their strengths and weaknesses and show them the next steps in their way toward their educational goals. Sluijsmans and Prins (2006) studied integrated peer-assessment in teacher education and reported a significant positive relationship between the participants' peer-assessment tasks and their learning improvement. Pare and Joordens (2008) investigated peer-assessment and expert mark agreement through peer Scholar system (an online peer-assessment tool). They concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between expert markers and also between expert and peer markers. Wever, Keer, Schellens, and valcke (2011) investigated the reliability of peer-assessment in a wiki (online) environment. They reported that peer-assessment has high level of reliability. Based on the findings they concluded that peer-assessment has a significant positive effect on students' performance in wiki environments.

White (2009) reported that the participants had a positive attitude and a feeling of satisfaction towards peer-assessment. In another study, Karaca (2009) claimed that the teacher trainees considered peer-assessment as a process by which one can encourage

learners to take part in classroom assessment and persuade them to evaluate their peers' performance, and added that this is significantly related to their gender. Shamir, Mevarech, and Gida (2009) investigated the effectiveness of assessing kindergarten children's metacognition in different contexts such as individual learning, peer-assisted learning, and self-report. They claimed that there are differences between learners' self-assessment report and their peer-assessment report. Similarly, Tillema, Leenknecht, and Segers (2011) reported that peer-assessment affects the quality of assessment. In addition, Yi-Ming Kao (2012) reported that peer-assessment decreases participants' reliance on their own preferences.

Keig (2000), McLaughlin and Simpson (2004) and White (2009) investigated the relationship between students' feelings about peer-assessment and their course performance and reported a significant positive relationship between them. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) investigated the relationship between formative assessment and learners' self-regulated learning to manage their own performance; the results showed a positive relationship between them.

Ross (2005) investigated the relationship between assessment method and foreign language proficiency. Based on the findings, it was concluded that formative assessment affects learners' language learning, especially their listening comprehension progress.

Xiao and Lucking (2008) studied the effect of peer-assessment on students' performance and satisfaction within a wiki (online) environment. They concluded that students showed a high level of improvement in writing and a high level of satisfaction with the peer-evaluation method.

Butler and Lee (2010), through investigating the effects of self-assessment among EFL learners, claimed that self-assessment has a positive effect on learners' English learning and can improve their self-confidence.

Chen (2010) investigated the implementation and evaluation of a mobile self and peer-assessment system. The results showed that learners' mobile assessment system and its implementation affect their attitude.

Esfandiari and Myford (2013) aimed to investigate the differences among self, peer, and teacher-assessment. They reported that among the three assessor types, teacher-assessors were the most severe and self-assessors were the most convenient one.

Zarei and Sayar Mahdavi (2014) studied how peer and teacher-assessment affect EFL learners' grammatical and lexical writing accuracy. The results showed that the peer-assessed group significantly outperformed the teacher-assessed group in both grammatical and lexical writing.

To conclude, although various aspects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment as well as the effect of assessment type on different aspects of language learning have been investigated, there appears to be

a paucity of research on the effect of the type of assessment on students' feelings of self-regulation. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on self-regulated learning.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were a sample of 94 male and female intermediate level Iranian EFL students between the ages of 19 and 28 at IT English language institute in Qazvin. All the participants had been studying English for more than four years. After these years of study, they were expected to be familiar with types of assessment and types of strategies that they used. Still, to ensure full understanding, the key elements were elaborated in their native language.

3.2. Instruments

The present study made use of two instruments to collect data including the following:

1. Preliminary English Test (PET)
2. Self-regulated questionnaire

3.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)

A PET was used to determine the participants' level of proficiency and to homogenize them before starting the new semester at the institute. PET is a standard test to determine intermediate students' level of proficiency. The version of the PET used in the present study included 55 multiple-choice items, 30 grammatical items, and 25 vocabulary items. The test also consisted of four types of reading comprehension questions including matching, true-false, comprehension questions and a text with gaps.

3.2.2. Self-regulated questionnaire

To measure the participants' self-regulated learning, O'Neil and Herl's (1998) self-regulated questionnaire was used. It consisted of 32 items on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was taken from Zarei and Hatami (2012). The questionnaire measured the participants' use of self-regulated strategies, and every 8 items measured a different component including: planning, self-checking, effort and self-efficacy. To facilitate the participants' performance, the translated version of the questionnaire was utilized. The reliability of the Persian version of the questionnaire was estimated through Cronbach's Alpha, and it turned out to be 0.84 ($\alpha = 0.84$).

3.3. Procedure

To collect the required data, the following steps were followed:

In the first stage, the participants who were studying English as a foreign language in an institute in Qazvin were selected. To prevent the participants' confusion and to remove any possible source of anxiety, all of the participants were informed about the aims of the study.

In the second stage, to check the participants' homogeneity, the PET test was administered at the outset of the study to make sure there were no significant differences among them in terms of the level of English language proficiency. The time allocated to this test was 60 minutes. The results revealed that the participants were more or less at the same level of proficiency.

Then the self-regulation questionnaire was administered, and the participants were required to complete the above questionnaire by choosing from among 5 alternatives ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The time allocated to the questionnaire was 30 minutes.

Then, the 16-session treatment began during which the participants were divided into three groups and each group received a different type of treatment (self, peer, and teacher-assessment).

At the end of the treatment period, the same questionnaire was administered again to measure the participants' gain after the implementation of the self, peer, and teacher-assessment techniques. The obtained data were summarized and submitted to statistical analysis.

3.4. Data analysis

Table 2: Test statistics for ANCOVA on self-regulation

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power ^b
Corrected Model	13681.845 ^a	3	4560.615	33.185	.000	.525	1.000
Intercept	4203.937	1	4203.937	30.589	.000	.254	1.000
selfregulationpre	13034.540	1	13034.540	94.844	.000	.513	1.000
group	63.350	2	31.675	.230	.795	.005	.085
Error	12368.793	90	137.431				
Total	1580516.000	94					
Corrected Total	26050.638	93					

a. R Squared = .525 (Adjusted R Squared = .509)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 2 shows that there are no significant differences among the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on Iranian EFL learners' self-regulation in the post-test. Meanwhile, there were significant differences among them in the pre-test ($F_{(1,93)} = 2.30, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported.

4.2. Discussion

The finding of this study was that there were no significant differences among the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on self-regulation. This finding is in contrast to those of Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and Huang (2011), who

To analyze the collected data and to answer the research question about the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on learners' self-regulation, the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) procedure was utilized.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Result

The research question attempted to investigate the differences among the effects of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on Iranian EFL learners' self-regulation. To answer the research question, the ANCOVA was used. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on self-regulation

group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
self	131.9333	14.95956	30
peer	128.5000	17.12565	34
teacher	125.3667	17.84509	30
Total	128.5957	16.73662	94

It can be seen from Table 1 that the first group, which received self-assessment, has the highest mean ($x = 131.93$), followed by the second group, which received peer-assessment ($x = 128.50$), and the third group, which received teacher-assessment, has the lowest mean ($x = 125.59$). To see whether there are any significant differences among the three groups, the ANCOVA was run, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

found a positive relationship between assessment and learners' self-regulation. In addition, this finding does not corroborate those of Zimmerman and Bandura (1994), who reported a positive relationship between self-assessment and self-regulation. This finding also contradicts those of Zimmerman (2008), who reported a positive relationship between self-regulation and learners' performance, and Mirhassani, et al. (2007), who reported a positive relationship between self-regulation and language learning proficiency, because a positive relationship between assessment and learners' performance and language learning proficiency has already been reported by other researchers (Singh, 2008; Tomlinson, 2005).

A number of factors could possibly account for these findings. One of the reasons may be the Iranian socio-cultural educational setting, in which students are used to follow teachers' instructions and most classes are teacher-centered. Moreover, teachers are usually change-resistant, and are used to the security of comfortable routines, which may decrease learners' motivation. As Williams and Burden (1997) reported, learners' behavior and context have significant effects on their motivation.

Another reason may be attributed to the learners' knowledge about the differences among the types of assessment. When learners were so much aware of the benefits of self-assessment, they tend to use this type of assessment to obviate the need for teacher assessment, which causes stress and anxiety resulting in a decrease in their active participation in class activities. Learners in teacher-centered classes try to save themselves from losing face.

Another possible reason could be the students' proficiency level and age. For example, participants in Huang's (2011) study were all college students, and in Yi-Ming Kao's (2012) study, all of the participants were graduate students. But in this study, the participants were a combination of high school and collage learners. This may have affected their performance. It might be argued that when learners are at different levels of proficiency, their tendency toward expressing their opinion may be moderated. Another factor could have been the age of the participants. The participants of this study were between the age ranges of 19 to 28. So, one of the reasons why we came up with different results was probably because of the differences between the age level of the participants in this study and those of other similar studies. Another factor that might have influenced the outcome of this study may be the students' personality traits, especially being extrovert or introvert in expressing their own preferences. Introvert learners cannot express their ideas freely, and may find it more comfortable to follow others' instruction.

Also, the participants' linguistic background or their self-confidence and their opportunity to use target language in such contexts may have affected the result of this study. The participants' motivation can also be addressed as another possible factor that may have brought about such a finding. As Zimmerman (2008) reports, there is a positive relationship between self-regulation and motivation. The other possible reason could be the participants' gender, which was not taken into account in this study.

Last but not least, the periods of treatment and the sample of the participants might account for a part of the existing differences between this finding of the present study and that of similar studies.

5. Conclusion

This study showed no significant differences among the effects of types of assessment on learners' self-regulation. In educational systems, interested

teachers come to learn how to improve learners' self-efficacy to improve class performance. They may examine different types of assessment in classroom contexts, and alter them to achieve the desired outcomes. For example, they may shift from self-assessment to peer-assessment, to teacher-assessment. This usually causes stress for learners and mostly makes them confused about classroom atmosphere. It can be concluded from the results of the present study that if teachers wish to improve learners' self-regulation and thus improve their class performance, they need to think twice before doing so. Since assessment types have no significant effects on self-regulation, enthusiastic teachers need to follow other suitable techniques, which may be more effective.

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