



**Applying Self-Assessment Technique to Improve Speaking Skill on an Elementary
School Students**

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Developing speaking skill in students is a challenging journey. As a foreign language teacher of sixth grade students' level A1, I have evidenced that it is needed to apply self-assessment technique to improve speaking skill on Elementary school students.

So that, speaking skill is training in every day session, but learners express a few ideas with difficulty because they feel unconfident with their English knowledge. Also, it is identified that students find it challenging to work on different activities that involve speaking, such as; introducing themselves, talking about daily routines or expressing their needs in the classroom due to students' English level, and the lack of training in the skill. Thus, the importance of applying a technique to motivate students to keep on working on the development of speaking skill.

On the other hand, students could not develop speaking skill efficiently because of pandemic issues, online classes, and the new era of cell phones and tablets. All these aspects have modified students' learning process. Therefore, the teacher tried out several strategies to grade students' performance in spoken activities. One strategy was the implementation of flashcards in which students could recognize target vocabulary and described color, size, weather, other objects, etc. In that way, students could see their progress by applying self-assessment, and know what target language they need to use. Students could participate more and at the same time increase their speaking skill.

As a conclusion, it is important to increase spoken production in students, and motivate learners in the process of acquiring another language. Thus, it is needed to carry out an intervention to apply self-assessment as a technique to improve speaking skills on Elementary school students.

Literature Review

The improvement of speaking skill in the acquisition of a foreign language demands enough time and practice. Teachers and students play an important role; however, the challenge is how to involve students in the development of speaking skill, and make them active participants in each session. This action research aims at demonstrating the importance of improving students' speaking skill by applying self-assessment as a technique. So that, it is considered the implementation of self-assessment due to the fact that it supports the progress of students' abilities and helps them develop their self-confidence (Brown, 2000). Moreover, self-assessment is seen as a technique because of the significant input it has on communicative competence such as, grammatical, pragmatics and sociolinguistic (Joo, 2016).

Therefore, self-assessment stresses the purpose of conducting activities to improve future performances, the feedback and reflection students give to themselves (Andrade, 2019). Then, Harris and Brown (2018) claimed that self-assessment can generate quick results on students. As the students know their progress, they can practice what they need to learn as soon as possible, thus, the teacher workload to provide feedback is reduced. Besides, Ndoye (2017) stated that self-assessment is significant because it allows students to consider some aspects of their own process of learning and be active participants of it.

Furthermore, formative self-assessment can be applied in a way students carry out activities that involve the development of oral production, not only for filling grades but also for acquiring more experience and practicing speaking skill. Also, this type of assessment encourages and promotes language on students because they can learn how to self-assess their progress in oral production. (Nieminen & Tuohilampi, 2020).

In addition, Başak (2019) highlighted that motivation has a significant relation to the implementation of self-assessment. Students that are involved in activities that motivate them to learn specific things, such as, sports, art, video games or the like, promote students to generate their own reflections on the knowledge they have and the one that they have to improve. So, they can keep on having better results on their speaking activities.

Following, during the process of the research, some authors' contributions were taken into consideration in this study. From the point of view of Rolheiser and Ross (2001), self-assessment is defined as an important process to analyze student's own work by making decisions using a criteria to know their progress.

On the other hand, it was identified that the implementation of self-assessment has a negative aspect because teachers should know how this technique works in the classroom depending on their students' English level. Thus, if it is not a manageable technique for teachers, it will not be useful for students. According to Thawabieh (2017), the development and correct alignment of self-assessment can be affected by some implications such as, teachers' role, teachers' attitude and students' training.

Consequently, another disadvantage is developing self-assessment. Sometimes students are not honest while they are doing the activities given in the class, and to apply self-assessment would be counter-productive for them; it impacts harshly on the credibility of students' work. In that way, the process of implementing self-assessment accurately seems difficult and less useful (Jamrus & Razali, 2019).

In the majority of educational affairs, teachers find challenging processes, one of them is the way of assessing learners and the time to do it correctly. So, applying self-assessment in the classroom seems impossible due to teachers needing to organize a plan in which they have to explain, train learners to make them understand the

importance of implementing the technique to improve their oral production in future speaking activities (Rolheiser & Ross, 2001).

In addition, teachers should be attentive at the moment of asking their students to identify their own errors in a task. Then, teachers need to introduce a plan on how learners can give more attention to those mistakes or weaknesses, and teach students to work on them as they learn to identify them (Penaflorida, 2002).

There are some ways to train self-assessment in the classroom, and students know their progress by themselves in speaking skill. So, the following strategies can match in the development of the technique. For example, the use of communicative activities to produce target language, to put in practice what they have learnt, and to lead students into another stage of learning in which they can self-assess accurately. (Council of Europe, 2002). Moreover, self-assessment can be practiced by making use of open – questions. Those questions can make students reflect on their own learning progress and teachers can know the areas where learners need more practice and support (Regier, 2012).

Furthermore, the use of learning logs and KWL (what I know, what I want to know, what I have learned) strategies to work on self-assessment are important because students will be able to identify their strengths, and weaknesses by filling a chart. They can list how their learning process is developing by responding key questions. Teachers monitor the activity, leading to reflect carefully on their students' needs (Arends, 2012).

Moreover, the use of a rubric is another strategy to train students to self-assess (Papanthymou & Darra, 2019). When teachers create a rubric, they need to consider some aspects, such as; the content, students' English level, and to get students familiarized to self-assess. Also, it needs to take into account the skills to be assessed, and the grades for each aspect. So, it is important to involve students in the process, and

they have all the details clear, the right criteria, and the corresponding marks to develop self-assessment to improve speaking skill (Schwartz et al., 2019).

Innovation

The innovation consisted of using self-assessment by applying a rubric to improve speaking skill. The duration of the innovation was 8 teaching hours (4 weeks). A lesson plan was developed in which students worked on speaking skill. There were some exercises where students had to write and read. This lesson plan was designed according to the theory of backward design. It consists on focusing teaching and learning process on making students transfer knowledge.

During the time worked with the students, they were taught about the use of a rubric. It is important to denote that due to the students' level, the guidance was in L1. In addition, the teacher prepared an introductory class to make students know and understand the importance of applying self-assessment to improve speaking skill. Also, the students had to complete a self-assessment checklist in L1 per week to check their progress and know what they needed to improve while they trained speaking skill. In the first week, the teacher presented the final activity of the innovation to make learners be acquainted with it. This activity consisted of watching a recorded video made by the teacher as sample.

This video had to be done by students at the end of the innovation. Then, the teacher presented a rubric to students to facilitate their process of acquiring knowledge. Still, students were doing some exercises on their own in regards to practicing the subskills of the rubric, those ones are related to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Along the second and third week, the teacher and students worked together through games. Students were improving their oral production by online readings in regards to the unit. They also read and write sentences that were made in

class according to their level. Furthermore, they sent audios via WhatsApp to the teacher, as well as, they made a pre- performance that consisted on introducing their family using slides.

Finally, students recorded their last- performance, the one that was presented at the beginning of the innovation. This presentation would be better than the previous one during the last week. They made use of Flipgrid, it is a platform where the students can record videos or their voices. Also, it allows students to leave a comment in any video of any classmate. Thus, the class developed group work to encourage students to speak. They were put into groups randomly, and watched any video of the students, so they could give their opinions about other classmates' videos.

Research Methodology

This study is action research because the author is involved in the investigation to improve learning outcomes in students (Gunbayi, 2020). Also, it is important to emphasize that this research managed a learning context in which teachers developed their classes on line due to Covid 19, and how this aspect affects students learning a foreign language (Efron & Ravid, 2019).

The researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data to denote the improvement of speaking skill through self-assessment

This process examined some students' development, and the researcher could monitor the results in each session. This study posited these research questions: Does speaking skill can be improved through the implementation of self-assessment on Elementary students in a private school? What is the students' perspective about self-assessment to improve their speaking skill?

Participants

Participants were selected from a single 6th-grade class at a private school in

Guayaquil, Ecuador. The school was located in an urban area in the north of the city. Students were between 8 and 10 years old. According to the CEFR, the students were A1 level as they can describe basic aspects of their daily life, using simple phrases, and words. The students took a diagnostic test, it was aligned to measure their speaking skill only. So that, students tended to be in silence due to the lack of knowledge about target vocabulary and grammar structures, so, most of the time sentences were not intelligible. Therefore, the class had 10 students who were invited to participate in the study. Parental consent was provided for 10 students. The final sample size for the project was 10 students who completed both the pre-test and the post-test and participated in the self-assessment intervention. Half of the students (5) were male and half were female (5).

Instruments

In this part of the research, the instruments were used to collect data, and answer the two questions given in the study.

Research question # 1 Does speaking skill can be improved through the implementation of self-assessment on Elementary students in a private school?

At this point, the use of a rubric (Appendix 2) was an important tool to evidence students' improvement in speaking skill. It was modified to the students' needs and English level, and took into account the Cambridge format pre-A1 speaking rubric. Thus, the rubric was designed to follow the principles of backward design as it can be seen in the lesson plan (Appendix 1). It was approved by an expert in the field at Universidad Casa Grande. It was implemented to quantify three aspects, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Then, students were introduced to self-assessment as a technique in L1 due to their English level at the beginning. On the next speaking

production unit, students recorded a 30 seconds video before the formal assessment in which they could use target vocabulary, grammatical structures, and correct pronunciation of words. The teacher provided an example of herself, and students could compare their videos

Students managed a self-assessment tool to point out how well they felt the speaking production matched to the teacher's video. Consequently, the students had 3 days to improve upon areas they recognized in the self-assessment rubric. Finally, students completed a post-test in the formal graded assessment using the same rubric that was used in the pre-test. There was 1 week delay between pre-test and post-test.

Research question # 2 What is the students' perspective about self-assessment to improve their speaking skill?

The students' perspective about self-assessment is measured through the use of a checklist (Appendix 3). It was introduced in L1 too. The students were familiarized with this kind of activity after the implementation of self-assessment to get them involved in the process, and the students could know their progress in the development of speaking skill. The checklist detailed key aspects of the rubric in a way the students could check a box and determine how often they use vocabulary words, grammatical structures related to the level and unit, as well as, the pronunciation of words in sentences, finally, each student could complete the checklist on their own.

Data Analysis

To examine the effect of self-assessment on the improvement of speaking skill, basic descriptive statistic and a paired-sample *t*-test were completed. The paired-sample *t*-test allows for a comparison of pre-test and post-test between a single student's scores

to be completed. The analysis was done in Microsoft Excel using the Analytics Tools Pack. Thus, the results can be seen the tables and graphics according to the questions of the action research.

Ethical Considerations

During the time of the investigation, the researcher had to manage the classroom where the data was collected. So that, the importance of considering the impact of the research in the participants, as well as, the reflexivity the teacher researcher should have to carry out this study, Zeni (1998).

Depending on the participants that were observed in the investigation, the researcher needed to know if they agreed with or did not. Indeed, this research was conducted to children of an elementary school. Although the study was not implemented on site, the parents agreed with the process of the investigation and the confidentiality of the data collected. The recordings and personal information are not detailed in the study.

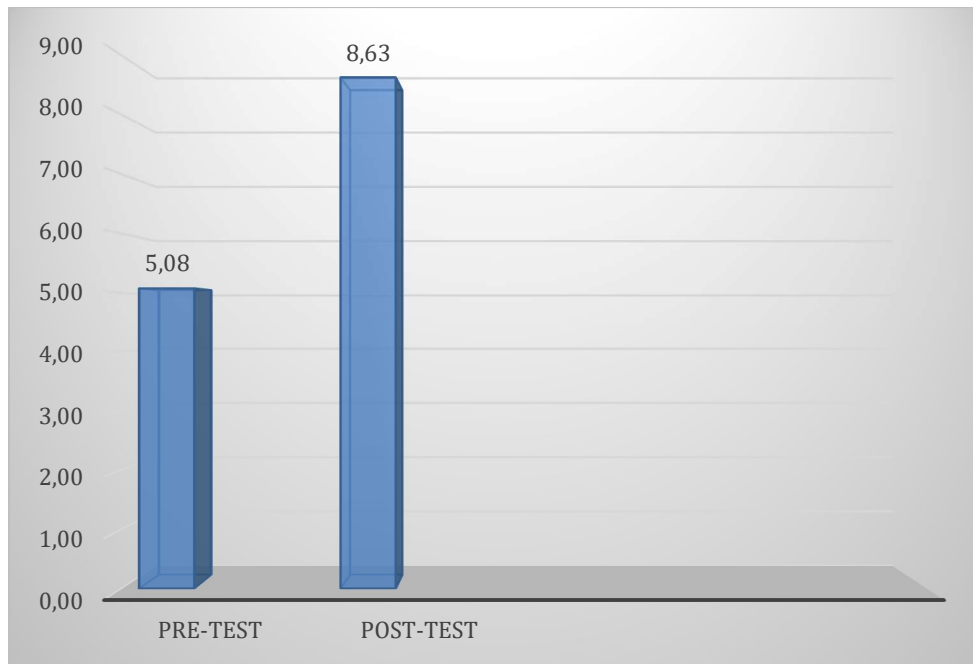
Results

This part of the research provides the pertinent response to the key questions proposed in the study. To answer the first research question: Does speaking skill can be improved through the implementation of self-assessment on Elementary students in a private school?

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Pre-test and Post -test

Pre-test				Post-test			
	Sample	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	p-value
Total	10	5.08	0.281	8.63	0.327	1.82	0.09

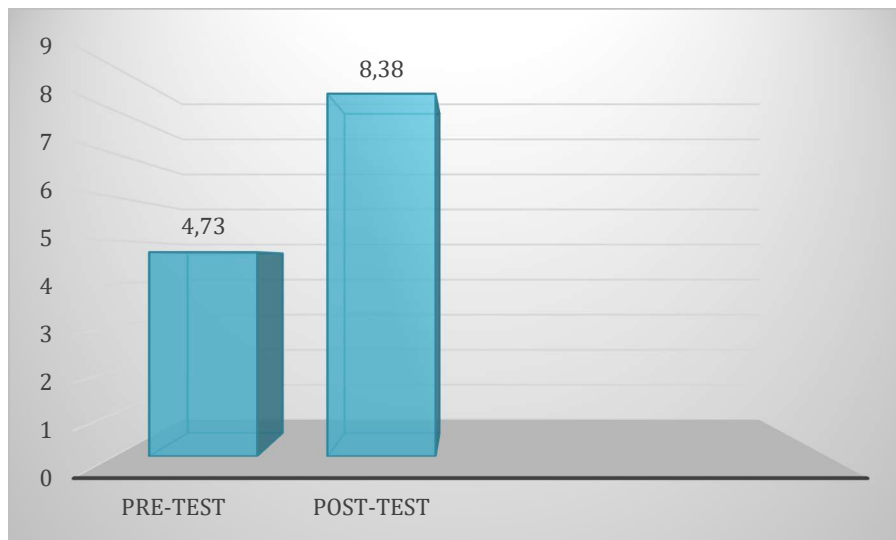
Figure 1.*Mean Comparison of Speaking Pre-test and Post-test*

All 10 participants completed their speaking rubric. Although students' speaking test was not graded for points, the scores are reported here to explore their oral production performance. Students' pre-test and post-test scores have a close result in the standard deviation. The p value is less than 0.09 which means that the pre-test and post-test average resulted significant to this study. It can be evidenced that the implementation of self-assessment could improve speaking skill on students. The results can be seen in Figure 1.

To answer the second question: What is the students' perspective about self-assessment to improve their speaking skill?

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics of the Self-Assessment Pre-test and Post-test*

	Sample	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Difference	p-value
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Total	10	4.73	0.248	8.38	0.329	2.02	0.07

Figure 2.*Mean comparison of Self-Assessment Pre-test and Post-test*

All the students completed the checklist at the end of every week. The standard deviation showed that the results were closed to the mean of each self-assessment test. Nevertheless, students' perspectives of self-assessment were significant to this study, as it demonstrates in the average of pre-test and post-test accordingly. The p value is less than 0.07, and this result indicated that the implementation of self-assessment as a technique to improve speaking skill had better results at the end of the study. A distribution of scores can be seen in Figure 2

Discussion

The participation of the students provided important results, so that, the researcher could collect the data to prove that implementation of self-assessment had a positive influence on the improvement of speaking skill on Elementary students. It also indicated the important relation of self-assessment and communicative competence in the development of speaking (Joo, 2016). The impact of self-assessment on students'

participation is another significant aspect to consider. Although students were introduced to self-assessment technique in L1, they could work and participate in every week session. As a result, they were motivated because their final oral production could be done (Başak, 2019). Besides, the implementation of the rubric to improve students' speaking skill was helpful. This technique let students learn a new way to assess their activities, as they used the rubric correctly, they could notice their errors. Also, it led students to another step in the process of acquiring knowledge, and in the development of their oral production (Papanthymou & Darra, 2019).

Conclusions

The main purpose of the study was to find out the improvement of speaking skill through the implementation of self-assessment. It aligns with the theories of backward design as the findings indicated that students could develop speaking better by working on a rubric to allow them recognize what knowledge they need to acquire, and learn to achieve another level. Moreover, the implementation of self-assessment to make students check the errors by themselves, and can improve next time. The study suggests that it is important to train students to self-assess and let them know the criteria and the aspects to be considered in the tasks they develop in classes, and the activities that need to be enhanced. Furthermore, the teacher could learn a lot from the experience, so that the teacher and the participants put in practice the theory and could understand this process better. The investigation was helpful according to the descriptive statistics, and the paired-sample *t*-test, both provided evidence that self-assessment improves speaking skill through self-assessment.

On the other hand, the correlation between self-assessment and speaking scores for the pre-test and post-test were not strong. It is possible that the implementation of self-assessment was affected during the time of the innovation and how it was

developed. Besides, it is possible that students struggled with the implementation of a rubric due to the fact that they had to work with it in L2, perhaps some students were not accurately assessing their abilities. Thus, at the moment of applying the self-assessment using the checklist, students might get confused because it was in L1.

Limitations

At the beginning, the study was difficult due to the number of students who participated in the research. The teacher's expectation was a class of approximately 25 students, however, there were only 10 participants. This problem caused a delay to start the innovation. Thus, the development of the study was promptly, and students were introduced to the research as soon as possible. On the other hand, the online scenario was another limitation because the students took classes in the morning, and the time to work on the study was not enough. Furthermore, some students could not join the class due to energy issues or problems with the internet connection. Sometimes, it also caused the teacher to reschedule the classes to have the 10 students present.

Recommendations

In the future it will be useful to consider the number of students to be immersed in the study. It probably generates better results because there will be more participants to support the investigation likewise the process of collecting data. In addition, it allows the researcher to take the pertinent time to carry out the study, as well as, lets students to be anticipated to the investigation, and avoid the rush.

Thus, it is understood that the pandemic issues were unexpected, nonetheless, it should be taken into consideration the scenario where the investigation is led, it means the participants and the environment to develop the study. The researcher should manage, organize and plan those aspects mentioned before to be prepared for future investigations in the educational field, and students' benefits.

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Appendix 1

Lesson plan.

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Checklist

Available upon request.

Appendix 4

E-portfolio

Available upon request.