Implementing Self-assessment to Improve Speaking Skill in the Development of

Monologue Activities in Fourth-grade Students

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Modality: Research Report

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Learning English helps people to communicate each other all around the world in a spoken or written way. "Due to the global market, the requirements of English language are likely to increase every year and employees without adequate English language skills may find it very challenging to grow professionally" (Clement & Murugavel, 2018, p. 2). Learners should develop these skills from their childhood emphasizing the importance of promoting oral communication skill.

Many times, very young students feel insecure to talk in English for many reasons, such as: they are afraid that their classmates will make fun of them, they do not know the grammatical rules to make a sentence or they cannot pronounce correctly. In consequence, teachers can promote oral production in young learners by implementing self-assessment activities, applying pre-test and post-test and creating a rubric.

Fourth grade students, did not do oral assignments in groups or individually because they cannot express their ideas and pronounce correctly. It was due to the lack of vocabulary, grammatical and pronunciation rules. For that reason, many activities were carried out to improve oral skill in monologue activities. The main purpose of this research is to improve speaking skill where students get their autonomy through self-assessment.

Literature Review

This research focuses on the application of self-assessment to improve speaking skill in monologue activities. This section provides an analysis of definitions of self-assessment and its limitation, concepts of speaking skill and its importance, what a rubric is, what are monologues and how these concepts are related to the innovation applied in this study answering questions such as: Does the implementation of self-assessment improve oral skills

for developing monologues activities and which sub-skill was more impacted by

implementing self-assessment?

Speaking Skill

"Speaking is defined as the production of auditory signals designed to produce

differential verbal responses in a listener. It is considered as combining sounds in a

systematic way" (Fattah, 2006, p. 33). According to Rao (2012, as cited in Hussain, 2017),

speaking is the best way to introduce to other language skills and learn a foreign language.

Thus, speaking is a production in the organ of the speech that helps students learn a language.

Srinivas (2019) added that speaking is the most relevant skill when people want to

learn English to have better job opportunities, improve their business, to travel another

countries, to continue growing at work or in their studies and so on. To have success in

school or working world is necessary effective speaking (Zhuang et al., 2021). These authors

remark the importance to develop speaking skill because it is the main way to communicate

with others and to learn a foreign language.

Anuradha et al. (2014 as cited Hussain, 2018) stated that teachers had the following

roles in the development of speaking skill: 1) must be a model for students, it involves

teachers have to be fluent in English; 2) to motivate students to practice the language through

exercises.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a process in which students are required to assess their own

performance or work and to reflect upon their performance and progress in achieving the

desired goals and objectives (North Carolina State Department, 1999 as cited Marwan, 2018).

With self-assessment students take decisions about their learning progress making comments

or judgements about what they have learnt or achieve (Sebba et al., 2008 as cited

Papanthymou, 2019). Mahapoonyanont (2020) stated that "Student self-assessment permits

students to participate within the assessment and analysis method, which is a crucial a part of the self-reflection section of self-regulation inside the cyclic model of self-regulated." (p. 29). As consequence, students that self-assess their work can reflect about it, correct their mistakes and improve their work in the following activities they have to do.

Papajoanu et al. (2021) stablished acoording to previous research, there is a relation between self-assessment and language proficiency in learners. It means there is a strong relationship between self-assessment and language proficiency level. Blue (1994, as cited Khonamri et al., 2021) pointed out that self-assessment has several benefits: a) when students self-assess their work, they try to do better next time; b) it gives them self-confidence because helps them to know their abilities; and c) it helps to improve their knowledge because they would learn what they have to improve.

Moreover, Karaman (2021) stated that in education there is a positive impact on the application of self-assessment and academic performance. Zaim et al. (2020) claimed "this study is useful for teachers to assess the speaking skills of their students accurately; and students can benefit from realizing their real ability and in which skills they need to improve." (p. 602). Through self-assessment the students can increase their motivation to achieve the learning goal. Self-assessment aims to help students learn their skills and improve them without needing a third person to assess their performance. This also helps students to answer metacognitive questions such as: what are their strengths, weaknesses, what have they learned and how to improve, among others (Karthikeyan, 2021).

Khonamri et al. (2021) concluded in their study that self-assessment "had positive effects on students' oral production and through this treatment learners improved their oral skill (p. 85). Başak (2019) pointed out to test speaking accurately, different components should be included in the evaluation, such as: grammar, organization, vocabulary and pronunciation. At the end of the study, participants increased their oral performance including

these components even though a difference was found in the mean of grades between their self-assessment and the teacher's assessment.

On the other hand, self-assessment has some limitations. Chan (2010) stated that students can self-assess incorrectly because they are not sincere regarding to their knowledge or they do not know how to use the assessment criteria, and as consequence they can be delayed doing the evaluation. Therefore, in order students can apply self-assessment correctly, teachers have to prepare them by explaining what self-assessment is and the importance of being honest when applying it, explaining each descriptor of the rubric, so that they become familiar and practice or model a self-assessment with them.

Monologues

In this study, students practice oral skill through monologues. Monologues are oral presentations by students with the goal of practicing and improving the areas of the language system and their confidence (Pauliková, 2019). Unlike dialogues, in monologues you do not have a partner, since monologues are long speeches without interruptions such as narrations, descriptions or introductions (Kalberer, 2015). Karpovih et al. (2021) added "in a monologue, the speaker is the single character that has a speech to deliver and there is no need for a partner." (p. 3).

Checklists

In this research checklists were developed to help students to self-assess. Checklists are criteria-specific assessment tools that teachers and students can use to measure skill progress (Lauzon, 2014). "Checklists serve as useful reminders of specific expectations and can help students stay focused and on task when working independently." (Center for Responsive Schools, 2018, p. 157). With these checklists, students have an idea about what is evaluated and what they need to improve.

Rubric

Wolf and Stevens (2007) affirmed that "a rubric is a multi-purpose scoring guide for assessing student products and performances" (p. 3). As the check-list, a rubric helps teachers and learners in the evaluation of activities developed in class. To correctly identify students' strengths and weaknesses, the rubric must be well designed and be objective (Chowdhury, 2018).

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Innovation

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In order to improve speaking skill in development of monologues in fourth-grade students, the content of the book unit was adapted. It means teacher used same topic, grammar and vocabulary but adding activities focused in the oral skill development.

The unit title was "On the move", the objective in this unit was students talk about their or other's activities using the present simple tense, adverbs of frequency, contractions, use simple conjunctions (and, but, or) to join two ideas, so that, in the long run and on their own, they can describe simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases, provided he/she can prepare in advance. The application of this innovation took four weeks with three pedagogical hours in each one (via Zoom). Different tools were applied as Moodle (platform that is the educative platform of the institution), Liveworksheet, Quizizz and Drive.

At the beginning students were a little confused because they did not know what is self-assessment, a rubric, and a checklist. For that, the first classes were to prepare students. Teacher explained what a self-assessment was, what a checklist was. Thus, after practicing learners had more self-confidence at the end of the application of the innovation.

Students recorded a video; teacher selected two videos and evaluated these videos using a checklist as an example of assessment. Thus, students had to practice evaluating their video using the checklist and after they received teacher's feedback. At that point, in each

week students had to record an audio (using the Forum on Moodle) about the topic they learnt following a mentor text. Then, they evaluated their work using the check-list. There was a different checklist for each week where they had to evaluate more aspects progressively.

Research Methodology

Action Research is a systematic process where a set of approaches help to obtain a result of a social situation with the objective to promote an impact and collaborative participation (Burns, 2015). According to Pandey and Mishra (2015), "Research is an essential and powerful tool in leading man towards progress" (p. 7). During this research, for analyzing qualitative data teacher did an observation during the weeks that the implementation lasted while quantitative data was collected from the pre and posttest which were graded with a rubric and analyzed to answer the following research questions:

- Does the implementation of self-assessment improve oral skills for developing monologues activities among Fourth grade students of a private school through recording audios and videos using Forums on Moodle platform?

- Which sub-skill was more impacted by implementing self-assessment?

Participants

The sample consists of 19 students, 9 females and 10 males from fourth-grade in a private elementary school in Guayaquil. The students' ages ranged from eight to nine years old. Their native language is Spanish and they require an A1 language proficiency level according to Ministry of Education.

To fourth grade students were difficult to develop the oral activities assigned in groups or individually because they could not express their ideas and pronounce correctly. It was due to the lack of vocabulary, grammatical and pronunciation rules.

Instruments

To answer the research question 1: Does the implementation of self-assessment improve oral skills for developing monologues activities among fourth-grade students of a private school through recording audios and videos using Forums on Moodle platform? A pre and posttest were applied. Students had to record a video talking about different means of transport using Simple Present tense, adverbs of frequency, contractions and simple conjunctions.

To answer the research questions 2: Which sub-skill was more impacted by implementing self-assessment? The same pre-test and posttest were graded, but taking into consideration the result in each descriptor. A rubric was applied to measure it.

Teacher-graded rubric. All of the section in the rubric were divided into a high-end, middle-end and a low-end. The first one detailed when students have a solid knowledge about this element, the second one where students have some understanding of the descriptor, and the last one is when students have few or a minimal understanding.

This rubric contains four main descriptors, where the high-end of each one was: 1) Content; the video content is appropriated and according to the topic; 2) Vocabulary: student uses a variety of new vocabulary from the unit, such as: daily activities and means of transport vocabulary to express his/her ideas to others; 3) Grammar: learners use simple structures correctly to describe simple aspects of his/her everyday life applying a variety of adverbs of frequency in his/her sentences (e.g., always, usually, sometimes, never) and joining ideas with simple linkers (and, but, or); and 4) Pronunciation: it is about a students' pronunciation is mostly intelligible.

Data Analysis

To answer research question 1 and to test the impact of self-assessment in improvement of oral skill to develop monologue activities grades, a paired-sample *t*-test was

completed. The paired-sample *t*-test allows for a comparison of pretest and posttest between a single student's scores to be completed. The analysis was done in Microsoft Excel using the Analytics Tools Pack.

To answer question research 2, the pre-test and posttest were divided in four descriptors or skills, each one was analyzed to obtain the mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation to compare them and to know which sub-skill was more impacted by implementing self-assessment?

Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical considerations were put in practice. Students and parents were noticed about the innovation and their participation was voluntary. Mohd (2018) mentioned "the process of obtaining consent consists of the following: consent should be given freely (voluntary), subjects should understand what is being asked of them, and involved persons must be competent to consent" (p. 30). Flemming and Zegwaard (2018) argued that "The participants must provide explicit, active, signed consent to taking part with the research, including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point" (p. 210).

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Results

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To answer the first research question: The data was recollected through a pretest and posttest which were graded using a rubric provided evidence that self-assessment improved assignment grades since the mean grade of the pretest was 7.47 and the score obtained in the posttest was 8.87 (See figure 1). Despite this, students 7 and 12 did not show any improvement in their grades because they did not attend all classes, and they did not do the activities. As consequence, this prevented them for improving.

Figure 1.

Comparison of mean pretest and posttest total grades.

Comparison between Pretest and Postest grades
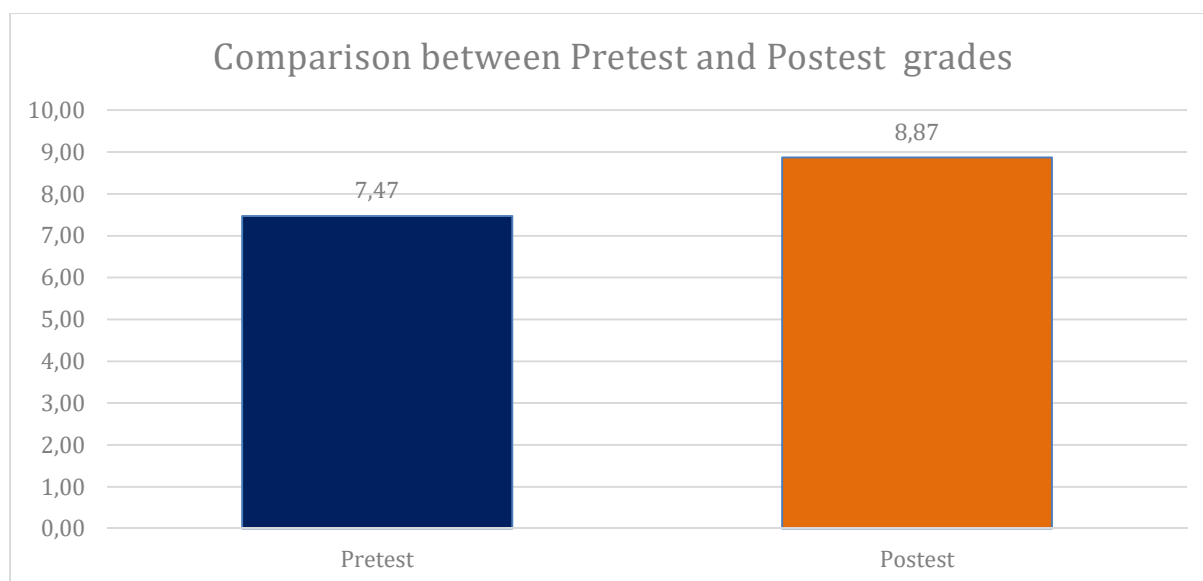
A paired-sample test was used to explore the research question 1, "Does the implementation of self-assessment improve oral skills for developing monologues activities among fourth-grade students of a private school through recording audios using Forums on Moodle platform?" In a paired-sample t-test, the Null Hypothesis (Ho) is that there is no difference between dependent groups while the Alternative hypothesis (H1) means that there is an influence of self-assessment on speaking skill.

Analyzing t-test results (see Table 1), there is an increase in the Mean of the Posttest in comparison to the Pre-test and the p value is less 0.05. The paired-sample t-test results identified a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores. The test indicated support for the alternative hypothesis (H1).

Table 1.

Statistical comparison of pretest and posttest.

	N	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**P. value**
Pretest	19	6	9	7.47	0.98	0.00
Posttest	19	6	10	8.87	1.31	0.00

Results of pretest and posttest based on each descriptor based on the rubric

To answer question research 2: a rubric was applied with four descriptors where it showed a positive influence in sub-skills detailed in the rubric because students improved in all the parameters. Regarding to Mean in the pretest and posttest, Content increased from 2.11 to 2.32, Grammar from 1.79 to 2.29, Vocabulary from 1.55 to 2.11 and Pronunciation from 2.03 to 2.16 where Vocabulary was the sub-skill that had more impacted with the self-assessment application with 0.55 point of difference (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Statistical comparison of results of pretest and posttest based on each descriptor in the rubric

PRE-TEST					POSTTEST			
	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev.		Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
Content	2.11	1.5	2.5	0.36	**Content**	2.32	1.5	2.5	0.38
Grammar	1.79	1.5	2.5	0.35	**Grammar**	2.29	1.5	2.5	0.38
Vocabulary	1.55	1.5	2	0.16	**Vocabulary**	2.11	1.5	2.5	0.43
Pronunciation	2.03	1.5	2.5	0.42	**Pronunciation**	2.16	1.5	2.5	0.37

Discussion

The research question 1 examined the effect of self-assessment in the improvement of speaking skill. The comparison between the pre and posttest results showed students ameliorate their oral production. These results match similarities with the researches of Papajoanu et al (2021), Blue (1994, as cited Khonamri et al, 2021), Karaman (2021) who affirmed the positive impact that self-assessment has on the academic performance and speaking skill of the students.

Regarding to which sub-skill was more impacted by implementing self-assessment? By analyzing the statistical results between the descriptors of pre and posttest was concluded that students improved in the different sub-skills, but the results indicated the sub-skill more impacted was the vocabulary. It was an interesting data obtained in this research because for talking about a specific topic is necessary the acquisition of words that allow students express

their ideas. This matches with the result of Başak (2019) who emphasized that participants increased their oral skill including their sub-skills.

Moreover, at the end of the intervention students were less nervous, more confident and they felt more comfortable when they did the last activity. This is related with the benefits of applying self-assessment that stablished Blue (1994 as cited Khonamri et al, 2021). This demonstrated that the use of self-assessment had an impact on the improvement of speaking ability as well as on how students feel when they performing the activities.

Conclusions

This research analyzes the impact of self-assessment to improve speaking skill to develop monologue activities in young learners. The intervention was applied to 19 students from fourth grade at a private school in Guayaquil. At the beginning of the intervention, students did a pre-test. Then, they practiced different exercises which were adapted from the book unit to promote oral production recording videos and audios through Moodle platform to apply self-assess. Furthermore, students developed the ability to self-assess their activities using a checklist that helped them to understand their mistakes and correct them. At the end of this intervention, self-assessment significantly improved speaking skill performance on students.

Limitations

Although the current study was carried out to 19 students. As it was mentioned in the results section, two students did not show any improvement in their grades. Another limitation was that fourth grade has a total of 26 students, that means 7 students did not participate in the study because their parents did not sign the permission or the student did not do the pretest. It would be great to include them in the study because most of them improved their grades.

Moreover, it would be helpful to apply surveys to students before and after the intervention, to know how they feel regarding the innovation and the improvement of the oral skill applying self-assessment. Furthermore, students only self-assess using check-list and not the rubric. It would be interesting know how student grade their knowledge because with this data, the teacher would make a comparison between grades from teacher and self-assessment.

Recommendations

In the future, it would be helpful to apply different strategies with students that do not show any improvement during the intervention process. In addition, it would be better if all students can participate in the innovation to demonstrate that the most part of students improve their grades in oral activities. Further, it would be important to ask students in a survey or interview about their self-assessment process and perceptions. The last recommendation is students should apply the rubric in posttest to compare these grades with teacher grades.

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Appendix A

Lesson plan with backward design

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Lesson plan implemented

Available upon request.

MENTOR TEXT
Week 1 (Model Final Task)

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Mentor texts

Available upon request.

Appendix D:

Self-assessment Checklists

Available upon request.

Appendix E

Summative assessment rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix F

E-portfolio

Available upon request.