



**Implementation of Self-Assessment Through the Production of a Sustained Monologue  
to Develop Speaking Skills.**

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The internet has become a global phenomenon, and people are creating virtual environments presented mainly in English. Today more than ever, learners need to understand the importance of English to succeed in this modern technological world. Globalization is a reality, and English is the lingua Franca that connects humans in the digital world; for that reason, learners should be competent enough to develop themselves in these new challenges. As Östürk (2021) said, “There are, of course, many reasons for the dominance of English in the world; however, today, the reality is that English is the international lingua franca.” (p.58).

The pandemic scenario made technology necessary for learning since remote working relies heavily on internet tools which facilitate the interaction between teacher and student. Ecuadorian educational system was not the exception to the pandemic policies implemented worldwide, as stated by Parrales and Villafuerte (2021): "In relation to the current situation where COVID-19 pandemic issue becomes a global issue affecting worldwide, it affects the learning process in Ecuador as well. The COVID-19 pandemic situation has led to changes in Ecuador's national educational system. As a result, the online and hybrid education model emerges, expecting to keep up the younger generations with their learning activities" (p. 100). This paradigm of hybrid education creates new challenges about how the actors of the learning process develop to build knowledge. At the same time, this paradigm opens a window for creative professionals to design activities according to the necessities of the situation.

One of the most common problems presented is based on the learner's lack of competencies to produce oral descriptions about themselves. Therefore, designing a lesson plan focused on catching pupils' attention and developing oral skills is the vital importance;

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according to Bransford et al. (1999), designer teachers should master their capacity to engage learners in learning activities and make the knowledge stick.

Recognizing our individuality is key to human development; furthermore, when learning a new language, it is possible to engage learners in this process while improving oral skills through activities that guarantee the construction of long-term knowledge. Therefore, designer teachers should function as craftsmen in creating a balanced human development approach through acquiring knowledge, in this precise situation, the skills needed to express the learner's basic information orally.

The main problem inside the classroom resides in pupils' lack of willingness to participate in EFL activities, especially regarding speaking. The cause of this phenomenon could be attributed to a lack of positive input because this kind of input is, according to Lessard-Clouston (2018): "Positive input is crucial to developing knowledge and use of this underlying linguistic system, while output and interaction help students refine their ability to use all of these components" (p.12).

The main goal of the present action research is to teach students how to be confident regarding oral production practices and, simultaneously, determine to what extent self-assessment will improve students speaking skills. In addition, an underlying goal of applying the previously mentioned techniques is to help students to create a sense of love for the English language, making them lose the fear of talking and starting to think purely in English.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review is a deep look into the topics related to solving the detected problem through a specific lesson plan design focused on applying Self-Assessment to a simple monologue speaking task.

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### **Self-Assessment**

As Rollheiser (2001) pointed out: “Self-evaluation is defined as students judging the quality of their work, based on evidence and explicit criteria, to do better work in the future.” (p.1). Making learners aware of self-assessment as a tool of individual improvement can lead to a successful learning process and make pupils self-conscious about the importance of their work.

Karaman (2021) mentioned three types of self-assessment: the first type allows students to compare their performance with desired goals and revise it accordingly. The second type requires students to evaluate their performance on a test by marking, grading, or ranking. Thirdly, self-assessment with rubrics, scripts, or checklists is also standard for students to assess their work. The designer teacher of the current innovation deemed it necessary to choose the third path, using a checklist for pupils to evaluate their process.

The principal purpose of the focus on self-assessment relies on emphasizing the importance of formative assessment as a strategy supporting student learning through constant feedback about how self-assessment will be implemented, especially during the first period of the process, as stated by Karaman (2021).

### **Alternative ways to apply self-assessment**

Designer teachers should show learners how to apply the self-assessment process, focusing on making students aware of the importance of a proper evaluation process. It is essential to rely on the four-stage model proposed by Rollheiser because it implies a good design for every process step. For example, in Stage 1, guide teachers must set meaningful goals in negotiating with learners. Stage 2 students will integrate a set of personal and school purposes, relying on examples provided by teachers to understand how to apply self-assessment rubrics. Stage 3 feedback helps students to recalibrate their self-assessment,

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looking forward to Stage 4, where learners, along with guides, will develop productive goals and action plans (Rollheiser, 2001).

Related studies have shown the accuracy of self-assessment, as pointed out by Karpovich et al. (2021): “To eliminate adverse effects, students should be provided with extensive instructions on how to get ready with certain types of educational assignments” (p.4). As the author previously states, extensive instructions should provide pupils with comprehensive instructions in a clear and didactic way, especially regarding the specific activity they will be performing to achieve the self-assessment process successfully.

Drill exercises are essential to improve speaking skills; as Karpovich et al. (2021) wrote: “Foreign language speaking skills need much practice and exercise to be improved. That is why it is essential to use different teaching techniques to instruct students effectively”( p.2). It is the responsibility of the designer teacher to find suitable strategies to help pupils to increase their skills using meaningful exercises to fulfill this labor.

Limitations on self-assessment are worth mentioning because, in some situations, pupils need to be more honest about their performance and tend to overrate their results. Dishonest behaviors could be potentially dangerous to the research gathered data and mislead the entire process due to the implications of the accuracy of the results.

Another point to consider is pupils' ability to evaluate themselves during the self-assessment activity due to the mistakes related to them as beginners in this kind of evaluation. Therefore, to avoid the previously mentioned situation is the responsibility of the designer-teacher to clarify all doubts regarding the process, guaranteeing a successful conclusion and its subsequent results.

According to Hung (2019), as cited by Chávez (2019): “Despite the benefit this technique could have, self-assessment demands a lot of effort from students; they must be aware of how much they need to do to achieve their goal” (p. 9). The amount of effort that

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self-assessment demands from pupils could be a limitation for pupils unwilling to participate in EFL activities because they will have to apply a new way of assessment, creating a sense of discomfort beforehand.

As Tan and Teo (2009), cited by Mera (2019), stated:

“In this study, the hypothesis was that the student’s ego is an obstacle for accurate self-assessment since egocentric thinking is known as a critical thinking distractor. As a result, learners tended to use self-centered psychological standards instead of objective intellectual standards to decide what to believe and what to reject.” (p.12).

The lack of an objective learner standard represents the most common limitation regarding self-assessment. It could mislead the action research process due to the pupil’s biases regarding their performance.

### **Monologue Speaking Task.**

In a monologue, the speaker is a single character with a speech to deliver and no need for a partner. Monologue refers to when there is one speaker who speaks alone and does not have anyone else to communicate with, according to Karpovich et al. (2021). According to Galimova and Shvestova (2016), it is the characterization of a monologue by its emotional coloring expressed in linguistic features, generating cognitive interest in mastering a second language and setting the foundations of a well-raised personality.

### **Innovation**

At the very beginning, the teacher explained the unit's goals and the importance of daily communication in English through examples depicting situations in which learners could identify themselves and feel represented. After two years of remote learning, students have familiarized themselves with social media because most of the communication between

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actors was realized through video call apps, making the jump from traditional to hybrid classrooms less difficult.

An introduction to self-assessment is necessary for a scenario like this after students review every point of the checklist. At the same time, the designer-teacher gives practical examples of how learners should assess themselves. The unit consists of four lessons. Each class has its production activity, the monologue, and the final speaking task constituted by the previous speaking activity.

All the lessons started with a hooking-up activity that drew learners' attention and, at the same time, encouraged them to spark their curiosity in the following steps. First, the introduction to the topic relies on using flashcards with pictures to introduce the basic vocabulary to create in learners' intellect a common bond between the sound of the word's pronunciation in English and its abstract sign represented in an image.

Students relate the topic to a real-life situation as an example of how they should develop their spoken output activity while showing the practical application of the knowledge. In the first lesson, the content focuses on learners' personalities by describing themselves.

In the second lesson, students showed their favorite superheroes to make a short description of a character they like. The intention behind this focus relied on the necessity to create a bond based on innate curiosity and willingness to build learning. Relating the form of the content tuned to learners' interests will ensure a successful process, especially for learners who present problems with attention or in overcrowded classrooms.

During the third encounter, learners created flashcards based on their likes and dislikes and express themselves while acquiring a little bit of grammatical content and applying the knowledge they already know. In the fourth encounter, learners were introduced

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to vocabulary related to colors and clothes using online resources and to cosplaying their favorite superhero.

After each lesson, students performed a short monologue as an output activity. The first as a pre-test and the last as a post-test. Students applied the self-assessment checklist after every speaking performance and delivered the results to the designer teacher.

### **Research Methodology**

As Abud Awad (2012), cited by Albalawi and Jhonson (2022), wrote:

“This research aims to improve the practices of teachers and of those who assist them within the teaching field and raise their professional performance level by enabling them to investigate their educational practices and the problems they face, subsequently finding suitable solutions for such problem.” (p. 286).

Action Research is essential for developing healthy teaching practices and improving the professional level through investigation. Stating problems and finding solutions for specific cases inside the teaching-learning process will guarantee an improvement in educational practices and help teachers get a better view of the particular situation among professional peers.

The present research was conducted with the results gathered from two specific instruments to collect data, the pre, and the post-test, with the sole purpose of concluding if self-assessment increases oral communicative competence among learners from rural Ecuador. The pre-test reflects learners' oral competence levels at the beginning by assessing a speaking performance. The post-test demonstrates the achievements of the last performance activity.

### **Research Question**

Does the implementation of self-assessment through the production of an originally sustained monologue influence learners' speaking skills in a rural high school in Ecuador?

### **Participants**



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The participants were five students from the 1st level of High School. Participants are at the Pre A.1 level. Of five samples, three were male, and two were female. Among the male students, three of them were fifteen years old, and another two female participants were fourteen years old.

The tool utilized in this study was a checklist based on a specific rubric for every student as a self-assessment process. The observation was the primordial instrument that enabled the researcher to state the particular problem and design the innovation regarding the solution to the specific situation. The data was gathered using the results provided by the self-assessment checklist of every one of the students involved in the research after applying the innovation in a controlled environment.

### **Analysis**

Microsoft Excel was used to run the analysis (Analytics Tool Pack) running a paired-sample-*t-test* to compare the pre and post-test results in a single student case.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To avoid ethical issues, the author asked for consent from the learner's parents, who were part of the innovation. This study was conducted only after the parents signed the written authorization format. Audio files were deleted after being compared with the student checklist to respect the participants' anonymity. According to Godfrey-Faucet (2022): "Having participants engage meaningfully with the research process lends credibility and validity to the research findings." (p. 3). Credibility and validity are keystones for achieving a successful research and giving validity to research's findings leading to an ethical conclusion of the process.

Another important point to consider is viewing the research in itself as a training. As Godfrey -Faucet wrote: "In the case of research that is part of a program of study, such as

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master's or doctoral research, there is an added need to see the research as a form of training for the researcher.” (p. 4).

### Results

#### Pre-test/post-test self-assessment

The sample consists of 5 students who have completed the innovation process in the pre and post-test stages using self-assessment through a checklist.

A specific range was assigned according to student performance based on their checklist where a grade of 10 corresponds to More than satisfactory performance, 5 to Satisfactory performance, and 0 to Non-satisfactory performance. The pre-test and post-test data for each student are the following:

**Table 1**

*Self-assessment pre-test and post-test statistics.*

SELF ASSESSMENT PRE/POST TEST					
STUDENT	GENDER	AGE	PRE TEST	POST TEST	MEAN
1	1	15	8.3	10	9.15
2	1	15	5	8.3	6.65
3	1	15	3.3	6.6	4.95
4	0	14	1.6	3.3	2.45
5	0	14	6.6	6.6	6.6

The application of self-assessment has succeeded in its primary goal of creating confidence enough to perform a monologue that shows learners' competence. Comparing the pre and post-test results shows that the production of sustained monologue positively influences speaking skills.

Student 1 increased their performance from 8.3 in the pre-test to 10 in the post-test, student 2 from 5 to 8.3, student 3 from 3.3 to 6.6, student 4 from 1.6 to 3.3, and student number 5 reached 6.6 in both, pre-test and post-test.

### Discussion

The teaching-learning process is a dynamic phenomenon involving the development of several skills pursuing a communicative goal. The building of solid spoken skills is a necessary activity that will positively affect the utter learner's development. The first problem to remember is how to develop competence enough to perform a spoken activity and with confidence enough to make the learning stick to be used in a future real-life context. Developing communicative competence could be seen as a holistic process where learners should be conscious of the benefit of devoting attention to the lesson and how a correct self-assessment process constitutes one technique that can have positive results to do it through a checklist.

Similar studies concluded that authentic learning in a communicative environment is key to generating cognitive interest. The creation of a monologue is an activity that aims to create communicative competence through developing speaking skills because this kind of activity does not need a partner to be performed.

The research concluded that Self-Evaluation successfully improved pupils' work in their self-improvement. As Airassian and Gullickson (1997), cited by Aykut (2020), wrote: "Self-evaluation may help individuals to make judgments about the adequacy and effectiveness of their own performance for the purpose of self-improvement"(p.112).

It is essential to mention that Self-Assessment is necessary due to its formative nature, as Kalykbayeva et al. wrote:

"Since self-assessment is the key component of the formative assessment, in the course of which the students analyze the quality of their work and the degree of reflecting the formulated goals, principles, and criteria is assessed, it becomes the source of the assessment procedure" (p.644).

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Through Self-Assessment, pupils were aware of the quality of their oral production and, through this process understood the importance of the process. Furthermore, Self-Assessment results reflect the pupils' achievements regarding the goals pursued during the innovation in relation to the assessed criteria.

This innovation process was focused on the creation of a sustained monologue, as Karpovich et al. wrote: “By a monologue speaking task the authors understand a process of making meaning in the form of a sustained monologue that includes receiving information, processing it, and finally producing and delivering your thoughts orally in a logical and coherent way” (p.3). The production of a sustained monologue improved pupils' ability in a meaningful way, helping them to develop coherence and logical thinking.

Above all, the innovation process showed positive results of applying a self-assessment through the production of a sustained monologue, especially in terms of engaging in activities and making learning stick. Learners also used self-assessment for the first time, creating a sense of novelty about how assessment can be applied innovatively.

### **Conclusion**

Current times are difficult for learners because situations like lockdowns or the exposition to constant fear can affect their psychological disposition towards learning. Also, after two years of online education, where the complete learning process was mediated by virtual means, the level of competence has shown little or no improvement, especially in the group of participants involved in this research. Therefore, the present research focuses on solving this specific group of pupils: the lack of willingness to produce oral output.

Applying the innovation process focused on developing competence through Self-Assessment was a positive experience for learners. Now they understand the importance of a formative assessment. Data reflects a positive result regarding student performance gathered

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through self-assessment, making it evident that even the lower-performing students show substantial progress.

A communicative approach is vital, especially when the designer teacher's goal is to guide learners to master an innovative tool such as self-assessment. Meaningful learning creates a good environment where the lessons are prepared to cope with learner attention. Another aspect of this innovation process is to set the learner as the center of the learning, being their individuality the spark that ignites the communication process. Starting from the very core of learner individuality should guarantee that the teaching created would stick to be applied in real-life contexts and situations, influencing learners to develop confidence and competence regarding oral production.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

One of the most prevalent limitations in this investigation's teaching-learning process resides in need for more trust of the learner's parents about action research, which is why there were just 5 signed authorizations allowing the investigator to use the gathered data. The heads of the public education system should train teachers to become researchers of the problems of their realities, funding research and giving teachers the time and space necessary to conduct a proper investigation.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Learning Activities**

Available upon request.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Rubrics**

Available upon request.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Checklist**

Available upon request.