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STUDENTS' ACCURACY AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SELF-ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASSROOMS

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the function and impact of self-assessment process on the second language speaking ability of B1 (intermediate) Turkish EFL learners at a language preparatory school of a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. A sample of 46 students participated in this quasi-experimental research study. Quantitative data was gathered through the students' eight-week long self-assessment scorings, the teacher's scorings for experimental and control group and pre-post L2 speaking motivation questionnaire which was adapted from Iwamoto (2015) consisting of 30 statements at a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Qualitative data was obtained from retrospective think aloud protocols which took place in the fourth week of the eight-week long period and semi-structured interviews with two questions conducted at the end. The findings retrieved from Correlation and Descriptive Analysis on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) revealed that the self-assessment process was very helpful for students for gaining awareness of their own learning and improving L2 speaking skills, and also had a positive impact on the motivation for speaking ability. Although no significant difference was found between the experimental and control group in terms of improvement of speaking skills, experimental group still proved a considerable progress. The findings also pointed out that students perceived self-assessment process as an encouraging and engaging way to improve themselves in L2 speaking while taking part in their own learning. Consequently, the results of the study indicated that self-assessment can be utilized as an effective learning strategy promoting L2 speaking skills and motivation in foreign language education.

Keywords: self-assessment; L2 speaking skill; motivation; accuracy; EFL classrooms.

İNGİLİZCE KONUŞMA SINIFLARINDA ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖZ DEĞERLENDİRME İLE İLGİLİ DOĞRULUĞU VE ALGILARI

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten özel (vakıf, kar amacı gütmeyen) bir üniversitenin hazırlık programında, öz değerlendirme uygulamasının işleyişini ve bu uygulamanın seviyeleri orta düzeyde olan öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu yarı-deneysel araştırma çalışmasında, toplamda 46 öğrenci katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin sekiz haftalık öz değerlendirme skorları, öğretmenin hem deney hem de kontrol grubu için notlandırmaları ve ikinci dilde konuşma motivasyonuna yönelik ön ve son anketi aracılığıyla çalışmanın nicel verisi ve öğrencilerle yapılan sesli düşünme protokolü ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden nitel verisi elde edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonunda edinilen bilgiler, öz değerlendirme sürecinin, öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenimini geliştirmede ve kendi

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öğrenme süreçleri hakkında daha bilinçli hale gelmelerine yardımcı olduğunu ve ayrıca öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerine yönelik motivasyonlarını arttırdığını ortaya koymuştur. Deney ve kontrol grupları arasında konuşma becerisi gelişimi bakımından hiçbir anlamlı fark bulunamamasına rağmen, deney grubu kendi içerisinde kayda değer bir ilerleme göstermiştir. Çalışmada yer alan öğrenciler, yabancı dil konuşma becerisi hususunda kendilerini geliştirmede ve öğrenimlerinde aktif rol alma konusunda, öz değerlendirme sürecinin teşvik ve motive edici bir rolü olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları yoluyla, öz değerlendirme yönteminin yabancı dilde konuşma becerisi gelişimine yardımcı olan ve bu doğrultuda motivasyonu artıran etkin bir öğrenme stratejisi olarak benimsenebileceği görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz değerlendirme; ikinci yabancı dil konuşma becerisi; motivasyon; doğruluk; yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi alan sınıflar.

INTRODUCTION

In order to encourage learners to actively take part in their own evaluation process, self-assessment has become a trend in the field of assessment. Mousavi (2012) states that self-assessment is a way which allows learners to monitor their own performance while learning; is a proof of what they are able to do in terms of language skills determined as reading, writing, listening, and speaking; and how they deal with the language they learn in different situations. In other words, self-assessment, in the realm of learner autonomy, is an invaluable asset for students to be self-aware of their current abilities, which in turn can help them to be better decision makers when practicing, studying and choosing materials.

When self-assessment is closely gone through, there are two main aspects that need to be taken into consideration: measurement aspect and learning aspect (Butler & Lee, 2010). Serving as summative evaluation, measurement aspect focuses on measuring learners' knowledge of language and how well they perform in language skills. Along with this, self-assessment for measurement provides data to grade learners during their learning process and determines learners' level of language abilities and eligibility. On the other hand, learning aspect of self-assessment emphasizes learners' improvement in language learning process. By self-assessing their competence in language, learners can contribute to themselves in terms of evaluation of skills and level of proficiency. Put differently, self-assessment is an opportunity for learners to reflect and evaluate themselves. They can monitor their performance, modify their learning process, and develop their own learning styles according to their needs and preferences. Along with this, learners will become more involved with the language they are learning and more motivated to be a real part of this process (Paris & Paris, 2001).

In EFL classrooms where the focus of classroom applications has started to turn into being more learner-centred rather than a teacher-centred setting, self-assessment is one of the essential techniques to put learners themselves in the centre of their learning process and allow them to monitor and guide their own performance. However, although self-assessment has been proven to be very beneficial to learners' language learning process, it can be claimed that it is not encouraged sufficiently to be made use of for speaking skills in order to involve learners in a better language learning process. In this sense, there are some points to take into consideration for self-assessment process in speaking classes. First of all, accuracy of learners' self-assessment for their speaking ability is an important area of inquiry in language learning and teaching. In addition to that, it is still a question if self-assessment facilitates learners' proficiency in speaking ability. Furthermore, there are some factors such as motivation,

confidence and anxiety of learners influenced by self-assessment process. Thus, what kind of effects self-assessment has on these factors also needs to be figured out. Overall, the aspects and factors related to self-assessment mentioned above indicate the need for more research on self-assessment for the development of the speaking ability of L2 learners in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. In the light of explanations above, this research study aims to investigate how accurate L2 students self-assess their speaking ability, to explore to what extent self-assessment accelerates L2 students speaking ability, to reveal the effects of self-assessment on learners' motivation towards foreign language learning, and lastly, students' perceptions of their own growth for self-assessment in their speaking ability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defined as an alternative way to assessment, self-assessment is a kind of practice which allows students to evaluate their own learning, gain awareness of their own learning and be able to make reflections on their own learning (Lee, 2008). Hill (2013) puts forth that those who self-assess their learning are responsible and self-controlled students since they are willing to associate their performance and productions with the objectives they are supposed to achieve. They are enthusiastic about planning according to future objectives and eager to perfect the things they get right and correct the things they get wrong. Those students, pointed out by Cassidy (2006) need to be self-aware as much as possible so that they can fully reflect on their own learning and benefit from self-assessment practices.

Importance and benefits of self-assessment

Through self-assessment, students are able to gain awareness of their strengths and weaknesses while learning based on predetermined objectives. This feature of self-assessment makes learning active and meaningful for students (Zimmerman, 2002). This awareness gained through self-assessment also contributes to students' lifelong learning behaviours and academic achievements. Since they adapt the skills of making correct judgments on their own learning and recognizing challenges and problems and taking actions accordingly, students become more proactive. With the help of self-assessment methods, students as self-regulated learners acquire the ability to determine what they have in their background and what they need to learn in order to meet the objectives they are expected to. By this way, students can develop active, reflective and critical thinking skills in their language learning.

Since self-assessment acts as a promoter for formative assessment, it is pointed out that students acquire the sense of responsibility for their own work and get more engaged with their learning process (Donham, 2010). In contrast to summative assessment which requires passive evaluation based on tests and final products of students and doesn't allow neither feedback nor interview among students, formative assessment through self-assessment methods and practices becomes more helpful for more purposeful learning in terms of production and improvement in language learning. As students self-assess their performance periodically, teachers have the chance to make some comments on students' production constructively and provide formative feedback for them. Another benefit that has been observed through the studies conducted on self-assessment methods is that students get accustomed to their own learning process (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). In other words, their learning becomes their personal developmental process. Being aware of the objectives they need to achieve, the nature of courses studied, their own improvement and challenges while learning, students can guide themselves through their own findings out of the accumulation of their self-assessment practices.

Diltz (2006) also proposed that self-assessment practices facilitate the communication among students and between teachers and students. Students who get the habit of monitoring their own learning, recognizing their mistakes and perfecting their speaking ability are the ones who are willing to talk about their experiences in their own learning process. This situation increases the chances for classroom communication among students and encourages the ones who hesitate to get feedback from their teachers about their production. It has been revealed that this classroom communication among students becomes teacher-students talks. That is to say that students who notice their mistakes and become more aware of their learning process ask for more help from their teachers in order to make their learning better. Another important feature that self-assessment includes is that students can feel more comfortable with learning through self-assessment since they are not forced to take standard tests and assessed based on grades they get (Lawson et al., 2012). This also decreases the level of leaning anxiety and brings about more motivational atmosphere for students. With the help of self-assessment practices, assessment becomes a more useful and meaningful tool and students can be assured that their progress and success in language learning is based on their developmental practices instead of final product.

Accuracy and motivation for self-assessment

The essential point in self-assessment for students is to evaluate their own learning, measure it and determine how successful and efficient it is. As long as self-assessment is conducted well, it will be beneficial for students. It is highly important not to have any misleading sides about the quality of self-assessment (Hill, 2013). As it is clear from the sections above, there are some doubts about the validity and the reliability of the self-assessment practices. In other words, whether students are honest enough with their ratings for their own competence and performance or not, how reliable their scores for themselves are is a matter of question. It can be deduced from the nature of self-assessment that self-assessment could serve for educational purposes of EFL classrooms and be beneficial for students on the condition that students are reliable in their assessment. According to Langendyk (2006), unsuccessful students are always prone not to have a sufficient understanding and observation of their own learning process. Most of them think that their proficiency in their learning is always higher than it really is whereas they don't actually have any slightest idea about what they know and what they need to know. It is also added that students are traditionally taught to evaluate their learning based on their grades instead of having a critical overview for their learning. Thus, they do not have an insight into self-assessment practices for their learning. For this reason, this case brings about the inquiry about the quality and the accuracy of self-assessment practices. Zimmerman (2002) acknowledges that the accuracy of students' self-assessment is also dependent on teachers' encouragement. It is stated that very few teachers teach their students how to evaluate and reflect on their own learning and question themselves about their strengths and weaknesses. It is believed that the idea of self-assessment could not be adopted by students if they are not guided sufficiently.

Once self-assessment and motivation are investigated together, it has been found out that there is a strong relationship between them. For instance, Yashima (2002) found out that communicative language context and self-assessment practices had a considerable influence on the students' motivation and increased their willingness and enthusiasm for learning English as L2. In addition, AlFalla (2004) concluded that the students' whose motivation was considerably high did very well on self-assessment process and their ratings were accurate when

they were compared to teachers'. Thus, it was implied that self-assessment and motivation had a mutual relationship. In other words, the students were successful while self-assessing due to their high motivation for learning. Their motivation also increased to a great extent due to their accurate practices in self-assessment. It can be implied that when students' motivation is high, it also affects their desire for learning, their attitudes towards the language they learn, the amount of effort they make, and their courage to face challenges and potential problems during their learning process. Since students act as actual observers of their own learning, they follow self-assessment directions more accurately and become more engaged with their learning objectives, language knowledge and performance. Self-assessment also gives students some time to realize their attitudes towards language learning and change their behaviour if necessary. Since self-assessment provides formative results, students can have sufficient time to observe each stage of their improvement. It is a process which gives students a chance to help their own learning while learning whereas summative grades can only help students after their learning process have been completed.

Self-assessment in EFL speaking classroom setting

As a language teaching trend and approach, communicative language teaching is favoured recently in EFL classrooms. Giving importance on communication, interaction, negotiation and particularly learner-centred classrooms, communicative language teaching is closely associated with self-assessment practices in EFL classrooms and highlights the importance of learner autonomy (Graves, 1996). When the characteristics of autonomous learners are closely examined, it is found out that autonomous learners are able to recognize what they have learnt, to modify their target needs based on the objectives they are expected to achieve, to make a choice between strategies and skills to progress their own learning, and to reflect on themselves, in other words self-assess (Dickinson, 1993). For such autonomous learners and communicative classrooms, self-assessment practices are seen essential in order to provoke learners' awareness in their learning process. According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), communicative language teaching methods bring about a change on roles of students and teachers. He adds that:

The new roles that are available to language instructors are dependent on classroom pedagogy that instils an increased sense of responsibility and ownership on the part of the student. Consequently, language instructors must work to increase student opportunities to speak and communicate in the classroom and to encourage students to define and pursue individual language-learning goals (p.131).

Based on some empirical studies conducted to shed light on self-assessment in EFL classrooms, it has been found out that self-assessment is a very useful method for learners to make them responsible for their own learning and improve themselves accordingly whereas some of them were objected to the use of self-assessment in EFL classrooms. Based on the explanations revealed by Oscarson (1989) and Nunan (1988), it can be implied that self-assessment in EFL speaking classrooms can be quite effective that it injects confidence and motivation into students to communicate and interact in foreign language. Instilling self-consciousness in learners, self-assessment can make them knowledgeable about what skills they are learning, how well they are performing, and what they can do more for a better understanding of their goals and objectives. By this way, students can be encouraged to cooperate in-and-out of the classroom and feel more engaged with speaking in their foreign

language. However, some other researchers (Brindley, 1989; Cohen, 1994) are concerned about the validity and reliability of self-assessment in EFL classrooms. It is stated that students may not be able to self-assess correctly due to subconscious behaviours even though they are trained for self-assessment beforehand. Some factors such as subjectivity and students' desire to rate themselves as high as possible for their classroom identities may be thought as a destructive point for the nature and objectives of self-assessment methods. As Cohen (1994) points out, students may not be able to self-assess their learning effectively if they are not given the right criteria and rubric for it. The quality of the training provided and the rubric given to students matter for the appropriate application of self-assessment. Furthermore, Rolfe (1990) argued that students may sometimes take self-assessment more seriously than they are expected to and be harsher on themselves than their teachers while rating their own learning. According to him, self-assessment is not "a reliable indicator of oral ability" (p. 178).

Due to some conflicts when the findings of the researches mentioned above are compared, it can be deduced that examining communicative performance and speaking abilities of students become a very challenging process for self-assessment practices in speaking classes. The dilemma between assessing the performance on tasks or competence of students may hinder successful applications of self-assessment. There are some ways to overcome those problems and dilemmas and to perfect the process of self-assessment in EFL classrooms according to Nunan (1988). Highlighting that assessment is applied in order to determine if the objectives of a class have been reached at the end of courses, to detect the mistakes while trying to meet objectives and form a relevant guideline for future, he points out that the most significant point to take into consideration for self-assessment purposes and process is that students should be assured to receive sufficient and well-organized training. While building up the habit of self-assessment for students' own learning, Nunan (1988) suggests that students should be given some specific tasks and activities to assess their performance. By this way, self-assessment stands out as a facilitator for communicative language teaching methods in EFL classrooms.

Self-assessment in Turkish EFL context

It is widely accepted that most of the studies conducted about self-assessment of foreign language skills have revealed that it has not been investigated sufficiently in Turkish EFL context (Banlı, 2014; Orhon, 2016; Ünalı, 2016; Yıldırım, 2001). There are several studies which have attempted to explore self-assessment within Turkish concept in Turkish institutions.

Banlı (2014) in her study attempted to explore the role of self-assessment for the improvement of English writing skills and development of students' awareness in EFL classrooms. Selecting participants from freshman students of Engineering department, the study followed the qualitative case study methods. After students were provided with eight writing sessions prepared by the researcher throughout the study, they were to assess their own performance during those sessions. The data for this study was collected from self-assessment checklist and questionnaire. The results at the end of the study indicated that self-assessment played a very significant role in the improvement of writing skill for EFL learners. It was also found out that self-assessment helped the students to build task awareness for their writing skill as a productive skill. Thus, it was inferred that self-assessment brought more proficient production in EFL classrooms.

Orhon (2016) aimed to find out whether there was a correlation between students' self-assessment for blogging and portfolio keeping and their language skills in the process of EFL

learning. Lasted for ten weeks, the research study selected its participants among pre-intermediate level students in preparatory program in a state university. The students were divided into two groups: the group which wrote personal blogs and the group which kept portfolios of their own assignments. During those ten weeks, they were also allowed to share their folders with their classmates, get feedback from them and have discussions about their self-assessment and their classmates' thoughts about it. The data was collected through self-assessment checklist and a questionnaire based on learner autonomy. The students were also invited to the semi-structured interviews later on. The findings of the study indicated that the students in the blog group, in contrast to the portfolio group, improved themselves in terms of developing writing skills and achieving more successful language learning. They also found self-assessment procedures very helpful for themselves.

Highlighting the shift from teacher-centred classroom environment to learner-centred one, Ünalı (2016) attempted to find out what the potential effect of self-assessment of foreign language skills was and to what extent it facilitated the proficiency of Turkish students in EFL classrooms. Conducted with freshman students at a state university in Turkey, the study found out that self-assessment had a very significant role in determining the proficiency of Turkish learners. It also revealed that self-assessment helped to create a learner-friendly classroom atmosphere by contributing to learners' motivation and decreased negative effects of formal assessment. As one of the striking findings was that lower proficiency levels inflated their performance whereas higher proficiency levels underestimated their performance, it was suggested that further studies might take cautions for lower proficiency levels in terms of the accuracy of self-assessment.

Yıldırım (2001) conducted a study in order to investigate if training students would make any difference to perform self-assessment accurately and to self-assess their own writing. The participants of the study were freshman students who studied Engineering and Science at a private university in Turkey. There were two groups of participants: a treatment group which received a series of training on self-assessment before working on their own written production and a control group which self-assessed their writing skill without any instruction of training beforehand. The treatment group was also given a questionnaire in order to determine whether self-assessment was beneficial for students' language learning or not. According to the results gathered, there was a consensus that self-assessment made the students more aware of their own learning. In addition, the students in the treatment group had improved themselves a lot in terms of self-assessment within time while the ones in the control group did not rate themselves accurately enough. However, it was discovered that the students in both groups did not show any differences in terms of improving their writing skills.

As the literature indicates, most of the studies in Turkish EFL context attempted to investigate the issue of self-assessment within the frames of writing skill and the improvement of writing. Thus, the present research study aims to fill the gap by exploring self-assessment focusing on speaking skill in Turkish EFL classrooms.

In the light of the literature provided above, this research study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How accurate can L2 students self-assess their speaking ability?
2. To what extent does self-assessment accelerate L2 students speaking ability?

3. What is the effect of self-assessment on students' motivation for foreign language learning?

4. What are the students' perceptions of their own growth in L2 speaking ability after the self-assessment process?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

For the purposes of this research study, the participants were chosen from two B1 (intermediate) classes which consisted of 46 students in total: 24 students in experimental group, 22 students in control group. B1 level students were chosen for this research study because they were believed to reach a certain level of English as indicated by CEFR and thought to be more conscious of their own learning in English. They were expected to perform better in terms of self-assessment procedures throughout the study.

Data collection and implementation

Following explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, this research study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Lasted for eight weeks, the students as the participants of this research study were asked to self-assess their speaking ability recording themselves while speaking based on the given topics. Using the speaking assessment rubric, the students gave scores for their own production for eight weeks. In order to find out how accurate the students self-assessed their speaking performance, the eight-week quantitative data was analysed based on the correlation between the students' ratings for their own performance and the teachers'. Also, the scoring of the teacher for the control group was examined to determine if self-assessment accelerated the students' speaking skills in L2. Following this, another set of quantitative data was collected at the end of eight-week time in order to ascertain the effect of self-assessment on students' motivation on foreign language learning. Finally, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the students for qualitative data to learn about their perceptions towards self-assessment, particularly whether they found self-assessment useful for the growth of their speaking ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section covers the results regarding the comparison of the students' self-assessment scores and the teacher's scores for those students in order to find out how accurate the students could rate their own learning performance in L2 speaking during the eight-week module after they had been taught how to assess themselves using a L2 speaking rubric and received weekly feedback from their teacher. Collected through the correlation between the students' self-assessment scores and the teacher's, the comparison of the means of the experimental group and the control group, motivation for L2 speaking questionnaire implemented with the students, think aloud protocols with the students, and lastly the semi-structured interviews, the results are shown on the tables below and discussion on them follows:

Accuracy

The first research question attempted to find out whether the students could self-assess their own performance in speaking skill accurately after they were taught how to use a L2 speaking assessment rubric and received weekly feedback from their teacher during eight weeks. The data gathered from each student's scoring in experimental group for their self-

assessment in speaking were compared with the teachers' scoring for those students. The analysed data showed that the students' self-assessment scoring got almost close to the teacher's. The majority of the participants having taken part in this study achieved a great progress throughout the process of self-assessment.

Table 1. Overall Summary of the Correlation Rates Gathered

Number of students in the experimental group (N)	Number of cases with positive correlation (r<0.9-0.7)	Number of cases with moderate correlation (r<0.7-0.5)	Number of cases with weak correlation (r<0.5-0.1)	Number of cases with negative correlation (r<0.0)
24	14	2	5	3

Based on the results retrieved from each student's weekly self-assessment scores for eight-week-long period, the table above displays a brief summary of the correlation rates as a whole. Out of 24 students in the experimental group, 14 students could show a great progress throughout the process of self-assessment. These are the students whose scoring was almost as accurate as the teacher's or very close to it. Also, they provide clear evidence that the majority of the students in the group could utilize the rubric taught well. Thus, their ratings for their own L2 speaking were far from overrating or underestimation. In line with this finding, it may be right to refer to the use of accurate rubric for self-assessment and the way the teacher taught the students about its use.

Lawson et al. (2012) found in their study that the students could rate themselves accurately for their writing skills thanks to the correct use of rubric. The students were very engaged with self-assessment of their learning performance since they had a rubric through which they could reflect on their own language learning. In addition, Iwamoto (2015) claimed that students could benefit from the self-assessment process considerably as long as they were provided with the right rubric and criteria. Another important implication for the accuracy aspect of self-assessment may be the role of the teacher. Zimmerman (2002) claims that the accuracy of students' self-assessment is also dependent on teachers' encouragement. Thus, it may be right to say that the quality of accuracy and successful application of self-assessment depend on teacher's guidance throughout the process. Likewise, McMillan and Hearn (2008) highlight that teacher should provide students with a well-organized training and have a constructive role for the process of self-assessment. It can be noted here that the students in this research study were always in an interaction with the teacher throughout the eight-week module and the teacher instilled the students the feeling of autonomy towards their own learning in L2 speaking.

Growth in L2 speaking ability

As it is clearly understood from the table below, both experimental and control group displays growth in L2 speaking ability throughout the eight-week-long process. The growth in control group remains stable and the mean changes between 11.40 and 11.95. In contrast, there is a steady increase of growth in experimental group and the mean ranges from 9.43 to 12.58. As the table reveals, the amount of growth is more in experimental group than in control group. Therefore, this case makes it possible to claim that self-assessment as the treatment of the experimental group contributed to the students' L2 speaking skill and provided a substantial increase in their learning to speak in their foreign language.

Table 2. Overall Summary of the Means of Experimental Group and Control Group Based on their Weekly Speaking Performance

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8
Experimental Group	9.43	10.10	10.33	10.70	11.22	11.68	11.77	12.58
Control Group	11.40	10.80	11.02	11.72	11.22	11.80	11.97	11.95

When improvement in L2 speaking ability was taken into consideration, it is clear that self-assessment was an effective way to achieve proficiency in L2 speaking. Banlı (2014) emphasized the role of self-assessment in her research study for EFL learners. It was confirmed that self-assessment helped students build self-awareness of their language learning and provided more effective and successful production in EFL classrooms. Moreover, Orhon (2016) obtained positive data related to the effect of self-assessment on students' L2 abilities revealing that students' taking an active part in their own learning made them more conscious learners. These arguments support the data gathered in this research study within the frames of improvement in L2 through self-assessment. The experimental group displayed a steady increase of growth in L2 speaking while the growth in control group remained stable. Therefore, it is possible to claim that self-assessment contributed to the students' L2 speaking skills and enhanced a notable rise in their oral performance in their foreign language.

In accordance with Lee (2008) and Andrade and Valtcheva (2009), self-assessment is an effective way to help EFL learners to improve their L2 speaking ability and perform better. It is possible to claim based on the findings that students' learning becomes their personal developmental process. Being aware of the objectives they need to achieve, the nature of courses studied, their own improvement and challenges while learning, students can guide themselves through their own findings out of the accumulation of their self-assessment practices. Due to the fact that self-assessment methods entail a kind of process which takes quite time and students' efficiency, self-assessment can be labelled as a great opportunity for students to notice what they can/cannot achieve beforehand and take necessary precautions and make changes in their learning styles and behaviours. It is highly significant that students can determine how efficient they are and what needs to be done more to perfect their language learning process.

Students' motivation and their perceptions about self-assessment

Titled as *Attitude toward Learning to Speak English*, the first part of the motivation scale aimed to investigate what the students thought about learning how to speak English, what their attitudes were toward it, if they were enthusiastic for learning to speak in English. The correlation between the pre- and post-test for this section is positive, which was statistically significant ($r = .770$, $n = 24$, $p = .128$). It was possible to claim that the students who were not very positive about speaking English and lacked motivation for it got more motivated throughout the self-assessment process. As Diltz (2006) emphasizes, students may become more eager to talk about their experiences in their own learning process and more enthusiastic to interact with others in their foreign language as self-assessment within time lets students get the

habit of monitoring their own learning, recognizing their mistakes and talk more about perfecting their speaking ability.

The second part of the motivation questionnaire, *L2 Speaking Motivational Intensity*, aimed to identify what the students did in order to make themselves better in speaking English and what kind of strategies they developed for speaking. The correlation between the pre- and post-test for this section is positive, which was statistically significant ($r = .162$, $n = 24$, $p = .655$). Thus, it cannot be denied that the effect of self-assessment has taken a significant role on students' motivation for speaking English. As AlFallay (2004) concluded in his study, self-assessment process and L2 speaking motivational intensity of students progress simultaneously. The students who did well in self-assessment had an increasing motivation for speaking their foreign language. Similarly, the students who had an increase in their motivational level became more enthusiastic with their own learning through self-assessment.

The responses of the students in the third part of the motivation questionnaire, *Desire to Learn to Speak English*, provided a positive correlation between pre- and post-test ($r = .643$, $n = 24$, $p = .062$). The purpose of this part was to measure how motivated the students were to do more for the sake of speaking English. As the correlation proved, the students believed that their enthusiasm and desire to learn to speak English was increasing. As Lawson et al. (2012) pointed out in their study, students may feel more comfortable with their learning process through self-assessment since they don't feel the pressure of standard tests and get assessed based on grades they obtain. In line with this argument, self-assessment procedures may be thought to decrease the level of language anxiety and bring about more motivation and desire for learning, particularly L2 speaking.

In line with the findings based on the students' self-assessment scores and the motivation questionnaire, the students' responses for their own growth in L2 speaking ability after the self-assessment indicated that self-assessment was a beneficial process for students' speaking skills. One of the important findings gathered is that self-assessment contributed to the students' awareness of language learning, particularly speaking as in the following excerpts:

I believe that I have benefitted from the self-assessment process. And I can see its effect on my speaking in English. At the very beginning, I was quite shy and not confident. Now I'm not escaping from my international friends or native teachers. I try to speak with them as much as possible. (Student, Interview data, 18th January, 2017)

Definitely. Self-assessment in our speaking class was very beneficial for me. I learnt how I can manage my mistakes; how can I improve myself without my teacher. My teacher gave feedback to me about my voice recordings. I listened to him and my performance got better. This motivated me a lot. Now I want to speak more. (Student, Interview data, 18th January, 2017)

As Zimmerman (2002) pointed out, self-assessment helps EFL learners become conscious learners about their competence and performance in L2. In this study, since the students were the actual assessors for their own L2 speaking, they were in a continuous process in which they take part actively. Within time, their accuracy got better and they noticed that their improvement and performance was important instead of the scores they gave for themselves. Moreover, self-assessment helped them recognize their objectives to meet, their strengths and weaknesses they had for their speaking. Their scoring throughout the eight-week long self-assessment process

confirmed that the students benefited from the process. It can be inferred that self-assessment was a useful way for students to observe their own growth in English speaking and improve themselves continuously to become more aware language learners.

Another important finding of the semi-structured interview was that self-assessment enhanced the students' growth in grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. It can be claimed that self-assessment reinforced the students' motivation for L2 speaking and their self-awareness as stated by the students as in the following:

I improved myself in grammar and vocabulary a lot. I realized that I was always using present continuous because of Turkish. I was saying 'I am believing/seeing' etc. After I realized this, I was more careful and I think I got over this problem. Also, I got very willing to use different words instead of basic words while speaking. I checked the words all the time. And I learned a lot of new words by this way. (Student 1, Experimental group, Interview data, 18th January, 2017)

Vocabulary was the best part for me. Before I recorded my voice, I looked for the words about the topic of the week and I tried to use them a lot. My teacher like it too. I learnt a lot of new words. (Student 13, Experimental group, Interview data, 18th January, 2017)

I think the part I have improved most is the pronunciation. When my teacher gave me feedback about it, he said that I am bad at pronouncing the past verbs like finished, watched, worked, passed. After that, I listened to the right pronunciation and then recorded my voice saying them, and I always listened to them. Whenever I had time. Now I am aware. (Student 6, Experimental group, Interview data, 18th January, 2017)

As presented in the excerpt above, thanks to the self-assessment process, EFL learners may improve their language learning with the help of their increasing motivation and willingness for learning (Lee, 2008). In this research study, it was found out that the students became more engaged with their learning and observe their own performance more closely. They got more motivated to face their lacks and mistakes to fix and perfect them while speaking English. It can be concluded that gaining self-awareness of their own learning and guiding themselves throughout their learning process with the help of self-assessment made students more autonomous learners.

CONCLUSION

The results of the current study indicated that self-assessment, in the realm of learner autonomy, is an invaluable asset for students to be self-aware of their current abilities. The data collected through the self-assessment scores, L2 speaking motivation questionnaire and semi-structured interviews revealed that self-assessment has an important role to help students to be better decision makers when practicing, studying and choosing materials for their own learning in L2 speaking. The findings of the study also proved that self-assessment enhances more purposeful and meaningful language learning by making students take part in their own learning. Moreover, the findings confirmed that students' experiences, perceptions and attitudes are mostly positive and welcoming towards the use of self-assessment in speaking classes.

To conclude, the aim of the current study was, in Turkish EFL context, to investigate how accurate EFL learners could self-assess particularly their speaking ability, to explore whether self-assessment accelerated students' L2 speaking performance, to detect if self-assessment had any effects on learners' motivation in EFL classrooms, and lastly to identify

students' perception of their own growth in L2 speaking after self-assessment process. With the findings and implications gathered, this study suggests that self-assessment should be considered as an effective learning strategy in EFL classrooms for its various benefits for learners, autonomous learning environment and learner-centred classrooms.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has a few important recommendations for further research on the use of self-assessment. First of all, in order to reinforce the accuracy, validity and reliability of the research study, further studies may invite more teachers and examiners to score students' performance instead of having only one teacher as this research study did. Second, as this study was conducted with students in B1 (intermediate) level classes, their perceptions and reflections were mainly related to this particular level. Linked as a further step of this study, another study could be implemented to investigate whether the findings will show differences depending on the proficiency level of students. As the results revealed that, the experimental group's scores did not differ from the control group's scores very much. For this case, it can be suggested that a further study may spare more time than eight-week long process in order to get more reliable and valid data. Finally, a comparative study could be carried out with more proficient level of students in an attempt to find out if the level of proficiency leads to any changes on students' attitudes and perceptions towards the use of self-assessment in L2 classrooms.

Based on the recommendations provided for further research, the results of the present study should be interpreted as suggestive rather than definitive. More research needs to be conducted to see how robust these results are to alternative research settings, data collection tools and estimation techniques.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

Öğrencileri kendi değerlendirme sürecine aktif olarak katılmaya teşvik etmek için öz değerlendirme, değerlendirme alanında son zamanlarda oldukça kullanılan bir yöntem haline geldi. Mousavi (2012) öz değerlendirmenin öğrencilerin öğrenirken kendi performanslarını izlemelerini sağlayan bir yol olduğunun; okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma olarak belirlenmiş dil becerileri bakımından başarılarının; ve de öğrencilerin öğrendikleri dil ile farklı durumlarda nasıl iletişim kurduklarının kanıtıdır. Başka bir deyişle, öğrenci özerkliği alanında kendi kendini değerlendirme, öğrencilerin mevcut yeteneklerinin farkında olmaları için paha biçilemez bir değerdir ve bu da onlara yabancı dillerinde pratik yaparken, çalışırken ve kendilerine materyal seçerken kendi öğrenimleri için daha iyi karar verme fırsatı sunmaktadır.

Öz değerlendirme çerçevesinde, özellikle konuşma sınıflarında öz değerlendirme süreci için göz önüne alınması gereken bazı hususlar vardır. Öncelikle, öğrencilerin konuşma becerileri için kendi değerlendirmelerinin doğruluğu, dil öğrenme ve öğretmede üzerinde durulması gereken önemli bir durumdur. Buna ek olarak, öz değerlendirmenin öğrencilerin yabancı dillerinde konuşma yeteneğini kolaylaştırıp kolaylaştırmadığı da hala cevaplanması gerekmektedir. Dahası, öz değerlendirmenin etkisini yansıttığı, öğrenci motivasyonu, özgüven ve kaygı gibi bazı faktörler vardır. Bu nedenle, öz değerlendirme sürecinin bu faktörler üzerinde ne tür etkileri olduğunu da anlamak oldukça büyük önem taşımaktadır. Genel olarak, öz değerlendirmeye ilişkin yukarıda belirtilen durumlar ve faktörler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, EFL (Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce) bağlamında İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin konuşma yeteneği gelişimi anlamında, öz değerlendirme üzerine daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermektedir. Tüm bunların doğrultusunda, bu araştırmanın amacı, İngilizce öğrencilerinin konuşma yeteneklerini öz değerlendirme süresince ne denli doğru değerlendirdiklerini araştırmak; öz değerlendirme sürecinin öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini ne derece hızlandırdığını ölçmek; öz değerlendirmenin öğrencilerin kendi motivasyonlarına etkilerini ortaya koymak ve son olarak, öğrencilerin öz değerlendirme yoluyla konuşma becerilerindeki gelişimleri konusunda fikir edinmektir.

Bu araştırmada nicel ve nitel olmak üzere açıklayıcı ardışık karma araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar deney grubunda 24, kontrol grubunda 22 öğrenci öğrenci olmak üzere toplam 46 öğrenciden oluşan iki B1 seviye sınıfından oluşmaktadır.

Mevcut araştırmanın sonuçları, öğrenci özerkliği alanında öz değerlendirmenin, öğrencilerin mevcut yeteneklerinin farkında olmaları için önemli bir yöntem olduğunu göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin öz değerlendirme skorları, İngilizce konuşma becerisi için motivasyon anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanan veriler, köz değerlendirme yönteminin, İngilizce konuşmada kendi öğrenimleri için daha makul kararlar vermelerinde yardımcı olmak için önemli bir role sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Araştırmanın bulguları ayrıca, öz değerlendirmenin, öğrencilerin kendi öğrenim süreçlerinde aktif bir rol oynamasını sağlayarak daha amaca yönelik ve anlamlı bir dil öğrenme fırsatı

sunduđunu da kanıtlamıřtır. Ayrıca, bulgular, öğrencilerin deneyim, algı ve tutumlarının çođunlukla olumlu olduđunu ve konuşma sınıflarında öz deđerlendirme kullanımına karřı oldukça pozitif olduklarını dođrulamıřtır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalıřma, hem öğrencilere, hem özerk öğrenme ortamına ve öğrenci merkezli sınıflara yönelik sađladıđı çeřitli avantajlar dolayısıyla öz deđerlendirmenin EFL (Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce) sınıflarında etkili bir öğrenme stratejisi olarak düşünülmesini önermektedir.