

The Role of Self-Assessment in Modifying Some Psychological and Personality Traits of Foreign Language Learners

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the role which self-assessment of oral production may play in changing some psychological and personality traits, such as motivational intensity, foreign language classroom anxiety, and self-esteem, of foreign language learners. 159 learners of English as a Foreign Language were assigned to either an experimental or a control group. The two groups had identical instructional settings, except that the experimental group was given the opportunity to practice self-assessment of their oral production. The study, which lasted for 16 weeks, shows that practicing self-assessment may increase the motivational intensity of the foreign language learners. It may also lower their foreign language classroom anxiety and raise their self-esteem. Suggestions for future research and limitations are also discussed.

I. Introduction

Increasing learners' motivation and self-esteem and decreasing their classroom anxiety are two of the main goals which successful second and foreign language (SL/FL) programs try to achieve. Educators and SL/FL specialists have been working very hard to achieve those goals. Hence, programs to prepare qualified and competent instructors have been planned and executed, textbooks that may optimally translate course objectives have been developed, and various teaching methods and techniques that may help students to become successful SL/FL learners have been suggested.

SL/FL classrooms are not teacher-centered anymore. Teachers are now seen as facilitators rather than instructors. Modern pedagogical theory is now promoting learner-learner interaction and self-directed education. Wenden (1998) called for learner's autonomy which could be achieved through learners' awareness of their role in the learning process and their involvement in the evaluation of their ability in learning the SL/FL.¹ They assume the active functions of selecting the learning materials and methods and of deciding on the means of assessment of their performance. Increasing learners' motivation and self-esteem and decreasing their classroom anxiety could be achieved through many instructional procedures and techniques. But what seems to be left unanswered is whether the involvement of learners in the assessment process could foster better learning. In other words, could students' self-assessment help in the achievement of the aforementioned goals? The present paper aims at determining whether the use of self-assessment could raise students' level of motivation and self-esteem and lower the level of their classroom anxiety. Students are asked to participate in assessing their oral ability. Oral ability has been chosen since it is the skill that most SL/FL learners find to be demanding and to cause classroom anxiety (Saito, Horwitz, and Garza, 1999; Matsuda and Gobel, 2004).²

II. Review of Selected Literature

Exploring "motivation" has been a high-profile issue since the publication of Gardner and Lambert's classical works in 1959 and 1972.³ Studies reported in the literature have approached the issue from different angles. For example, some researchers have been keen to explain motivation along the lines of the Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985)⁴ and subsequently investigated and developed by Deci et al., 1991; Deci and Ryan, 1995; Vallerand, 1997; Noels et al., 1999; Noels et al., 2000; Noles, 2001; and Noels et al., 2001.⁵ The outcome of these studies is a

complex framework that adds more variables and motivational types to the concept of motivation. Hence, terms such as "intrinsic and extrinsic motivation" and their subtypes such as "external, introjected and identified regulation", in addition to "amotivation" have found their way into the study of motivation in L2 learning. Noels et al. claim that "The correlation between the integrative orientation and the various L2 variables follow patterns very similar to those of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, suggesting that these forms of motivation are quite similar".⁶

Other studies have sought to investigate motivation types and their role in second/foreign language proficiency, and their impact on second/foreign language achievement.⁷ For example, Gan et al classified their 18 Chinese college-level students, the study's participants, as successful or unsuccessful learners according to their performance in the College English Course and regular English classes.⁸ Gan et al sought to answer the following question: "How are they [successful and unsuccessful learners of English as a foreign language (EFL)] typically motivated into carrying out their English learning?"⁹ They found that successful learners were intrinsically motivated to learn English. This was promoted by positive learning experiences, in addition to teachers' positive feedback such as praise and encouragement. "By contrast, the unsuccessful students' language learning apparently was extrinsically motivated affair ... chiefly driven by compulsory examinations."¹⁰ The aforementioned study suggests that there are some factors related to EFL learners and classroom practices that may lead students into certain directions. The role which motivational intensity may play has been investigated; but results have not been consistent.¹¹

The role of self-esteem has been investigated by a number of studies. Previous research has explored the relationship between self-esteem and certain personality traits,¹² self-esteem and ethnicity,¹³ the relationship between self-esteem and motivation,¹⁴ and the role of self-esteem in learning.¹⁵ These studies have reported that students with high self-esteem are usually more successful learners and they are apt to overcome failure compared to learners with low self-esteem. Learners with low self-esteem often negatively react to failure and this negative reaction usually reflects on other aspects of their life. It has also been reported that older students at college level usually have a higher level self-esteem compared to younger ones, and that female learners often show a higher level of self-esteem and intrinsic motivation than male students.

The effect of anxiety on SL/FI classroom learning has been investigated from different angles. Some studies, for instance, have

investigated the validity of various scales for the measurement of classroom anxiety.¹⁶ The relationship between gender and classroom anxiety has been the focus of some research.¹⁷ The role of anxiety in the communicative ability of learners in their first and second language has also been explored.¹⁸ In addition, the sources of FL anxiety have been considered.¹⁹ More importantly, the negative impact of anxiety on achievement and proficiency in the SL/FL has also been reported.²⁰ Some research has been devoted to the examination of the impact of anxiety on a certain language skill, for example oral production,²¹ reading,²² and writing.²³

The impact of anxiety on students' self-rating has been explored.²⁴ Gregersen and Horwitz audiorecorded and videotaped oral interviews with eight college-level EFL students.²⁵ The eight students were categorized as anxious or non-anxious language learners according to their scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The reaction of the participants to their videotaped conversations was audiorecorded to search for instances of perfectionism. Their results indicated that the number of comments related to perfectionism, fear of negative evaluation, and concern over errors was greater in the case of anxious learners than it was among non-anxious learners. They concluded that "anxious learners reported higher standards for their English performance, a greater tendency toward procrastination, a greater worry over the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors than the non-anxious learners." ²⁶

Investigation into the reliability of self-assessment has been carried out; however conflicting results have been reported. Some researchers have reported high reliability and validity coefficients.²⁷ Ross, for instance, used meta-analysis to analyze 60 reliability indices among ESL and EFL studies reported in the literature of SL/FL testing.²⁸ He aimed at finding median effect sizes for SL/FL skills. He found that the average reliability estimate for the 60 heterogeneous self-assessment indices was .634. There were 18 reliability indices related to self-assessment of listening and the calculated average reliability coefficient was .651. The calculated average reliability coefficients of self-assessment of speaking, reading, and writing were .544, .614, and .525, respectively. Similar results were reported by Shameem who sought to validate speaking and listening self-report scales on a performance test.²⁹ The reported reliability indices ranged from .635 (listening delayed rating) to .703 (listening simultaneous rating). Shameem concluded that "the performance ratings showed a strong correlation with self-report ... These correlation figures provide evidence for the validity of the self-report scale since the respondents who were reporting their proficiency at relatively high levels were in fact also likely to be rated highly

on the performance scale."³⁰ However, other researchers have reported different results.³¹ For example, Orsmond et al. pointed out that "As a comparison is made between self and tutor assessment ... there was an overall disagreement between the self and tutor mark of 86%, with 56% of students over-marking and 30% under-marking." ³²

Factors affecting the accuracy of self-assessment have also been investigated.³³ Ross, for example, argued that the use of ordinal scales might be differently understood by language learners, a factor that could affect the accuracy of self-assessment.³⁴ Taras postulated that the use of summative self-assessment, tutor feedback, and the return of students' grades after their completion of the formative self-assessment were three factors that might affect self-assessment.³⁵ Considering the role of motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety, among other personality and psychological traits, in the accuracy of self-assessment, Alfalay (2004) posited that the type of students' motivation to learn EFL may affect the accuracy of students' self-assessment.³⁶ He claimed that students with integrative motivation were more accurate in their assessment than learners of instrumental motivation. He added that participants with low self-esteem were the most accurate in assessing their oral production. He concluded that low anxious learners were more accurate in the self-assessment task than their high anxious counterparts.

III. The Present Study

A. Statement of the Problem

Self-assessment has been investigated from different angles. Some studies reported in the literature have sought to explore its reliability and validity. This is usually done by examining the internal consistency of learners' evaluation of their ability and comparing the self-reported scores with those given by instructors. Factors that may enhance the accuracy of self-assessment have also been examined. Feedback and prior training, among other factors, have been claimed to increase the accuracy of EFL learners' assessment of their language ability. The interrelationship among personality and psychological traits of the learners, such as motivation, self-esteem, motivational intensity, and foreign language classroom anxiety, has been reported. It is a fact that most educators and SL/FL pedagogy specialists wish to have highly motivated students with high self-esteem and low classroom anxiety. The present study aims at investigating the role which self-assessment may play in increasing EFL learners' motivational intensity, raising their self-esteem, and lowering their foreign language classroom anxiety. The study is limited to the consideration of self-assessment of oral production in EFL classrooms. It

will also be limited to students with intermediate proficiency level in EFL.

B. Hypotheses

There are three main null hypotheses which the present study seeks to test. They are as follows:

- (1) Self-assessment will not increase EFL learners' motivational intensity.
- (2) Self-assessment will not increase EFL learners' self-esteem.
- (3) Self-assessment will not decrease foreign language classroom anxiety of EFL learners'.

Null hypotheses will be rejected if the probability level is less than or equals .05 ($p \leq .05$).

C. Limitations of the study

The present study is not without limitations. It was limited to the investigation which self-assessment of oral production may play in introducing a positive change of some psychological and personality traits of foreign language learners. It was also limited to male learners at the elementary level. Future research may explore the impact of gender and level of foreign language learners on the positive or negative modification of these traits. It could also explore the gain in language proficiency which could be ascribed to the positive change in these traits. Future research may also include other psychological and personality traits such as motivation types, and/or level of achievement in the foreign language.

D. Method

1. Subjects

The participants were 159 EFL learners enrolled at the elementary level of the Intensive English Program (IEP) in the College of Applied Studies, King Saud University, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. All participants had studied English as a school subject for six years. They had also passed the beginners level of the IEP which lasted for 16 weeks, at 9 hours per week. The aim of the IEP is to sharpen learners' four skills of EFL, in addition to increasing their mastery of English grammar. Class size in the IEP usually ranges from 20 to 25 students.

To test the study's hypotheses, two groups were set up: a control group and an experimental one. The control group consisted of 81 students in four different classes at the elementary level. The experimental group was composed of 78 learners who came from four different classes in the elementary level. Participants in the experimental group were asked to perform self-assessment of their oral production. Topics chosen for the oral assessment were non-controversial in nature. Participants in the control

group discussed the same topics as those chosen for the experimental group in their speaking classes, but they did not have the chance to engage in any form of self-assessment. The evaluation of participants in the control group was exclusively carried out by their instructors.

2. Materials

Three questionnaires were used to measure participants' level of motivational intensity, self-esteem, and foreign language classroom anxiety. They were as follows:

(1) Motivational Intensity Questionnaire: a sub-part of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) reported in Gardner (1985) and Gardner et al, (1997) was used.³⁷ The questionnaire has a reliability index of .76. It consists of 10 statements; the first five are positively keyed and the second five are negatively worded. A seven-point Likert scale was used. It ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." In order to achieve uniformity, seven points were allocated for "strongly agreed with" responses to the positively keyed statement and also seven points were granted for "strongly disagreed with" responses to the negatively worded statement. Hence, scores ranged from 10-70 points. The lower the score of a student on the motivational intensity scale, the less effort he/she is likely to exert in L2 learning.

(2) Self-esteem Questionnaire: It was developed and validated by Draini et al (1993).³⁸ The questionnaire consisted of 30 items with a three-point scale (often, sometimes, and never). With the exception of ten reverse items (items 1,4,5,6,14,16,20,23,25, and 28) a student was given three points if he responded to an item with "often", two for "sometimes", and one for "never". The reverse items were granted three points for "never", two points for "sometimes" and one point for "often". The lowest score on the questionnaire was 30 points and the highest was 90. The cut-off point was 60 points, which indicated an average level of self-esteem. A score above 60 points would indicate high self-esteem, whereas one below 60 points would show low self-esteem. The reported reliability and validity indices were .85 and .88, respectively.

(3) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS) Questionnaire: The scale was developed by Horwitz et al (1986) and validated by Horwitz (1986).³⁹ Its reliability coefficient was .93 and the reported validity indices ranged from .28 to .77. The scale consisted of 33 items, with a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." "A strongly agreed with" item is allocated 1 point and "a strongly disagreed with" item is given 5 points. The responses "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," and "disagree" were allocated two, three, and four points,

respectively. Hence, a possible score ranged from 33 to 165 points. 99 points was the cut-off point between high and low anxiety groups. Participants whose average exceeded 99 points were considered to be low-anxiety students, while those whose average was less than 99 points were considered students with a high level of classroom anxiety. High-anxiety students usually get low scores, while low-anxiety students get high scores.

3. Procedure

In the first and fifteenth weeks, all participants were asked to complete the three questionnaires designed to identify their levels of motivational intensity, self-esteem, and classroom anxiety. The aim of having the participants to complete the questionnaires twice was to measure any difference in participants' scores on these three measures. The two control and experimental groups were similar in all aspects. For example, they shared the same textbook, taught by the same instructors, and spent the same number of hours in the classroom.

Unlike the control group, the experimental group was asked to practice self-assessment of their oral production. Experimental group participants were first given a three-hour workshop in the first week in order to introduce them to self-assessment and to familiarize them with the technique. To avoid interrupting the program of instruction, only one language skill, the oral skill, was considered. Since the fifteenth week of instruction is usually devoted to revision, the participants were left with thirteen weeks, during which they were asked to perform oral presentation tasks and to assess their performance and the performance of their peers. A student was allowed 10 to 12 minutes to do the presentation; 3-5 minutes were allocated for the completion of the assessment questionnaires. With such rate, a student would make a presentation every other week, totaling about six presentations. In order to make the self-assessment task more meaningful to the experimental group participants, they were told that the scores of their self-assessment would equal 5% of their total score in the IEP.

Listening to audiorecorded interviews, instructors of the IEP usually follow a scoring procedure similar to that of the American FSI (Foreign Service Institute) interview procedure. Two raters assess oral production with respect to content, accuracy, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension and their scores are averaged and added to the student total score. However, to achieve uniformity in the evaluation of participants' oral production, instructors of the control group and participants and instructors of the experimental group were asked to complete a

questionnaire developed by Patri every time a student did a presentation.⁴⁰ The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions to which responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from poor (1 point) to excellent (5 points). According to Patri, the questionnaire was designed to assess oral presentations with respect to organization and content, use of grammar, manner, and interaction with the audience. The average rating on these 14 questions is usually reported, in which the highest possible score is 5 points and the lowest is 1. The reported reliability index was .834 and the validity indices ranged from .810 to .869.

IV. Results and Discussion

The means and standard deviations of subjects on the three questionnaires, which they completed in the first week, were calculated. The reliability and validity of the data were also ensured. The reliability was computed by using the Cronbach α statistic and the internal construct validity was measured, along the recommendations of Henning (1987:99-100), by using part-whole correlation corrected for overlapping.⁴¹ These pieces of information are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and reliability and validity coefficients of participants' scores on the first week's questionnaires of Motivational Intensity, Anxiety, and Self-esteem

Questionnaire	Group	Mean	SD	α	Validity coefficient
Motivational Intensity	Control	40.91	15.64	.648	.702
	Experimental	40.53	13.19	.753	.762
Anxiety	Control	83.85	7.14	.812	.751
	Experimental	71.60	8.20	.795	.673
Self-esteem	Control	50.21	4.79	.689	.703
	Experimental	51.47	6.25	.724	.698

The scores of the control and experimental groups' subjects on the motivational intensity questionnaire approached the midpoint between students with high and low motivation to learn the foreign language. Their means on the anxiety questionnaire categorized both of them as high-anxiety learners. However, their means on that scale were higher than those reported by Gregersen and Horwitz for their high-anxiety learners.⁴² The means they reported ranged from 34 to 41. It is clear that the subjects of this study had less foreign language classroom anxiety than those in Gregersen and Horwitz's study. The means of both groups in the self-esteem questionnaire labeled them as students with low self-esteem.

The huge standard deviations of subjects' scores in both groups in the anxiety questionnaire indicate that the groups were heterogeneous with reference to their anxiety level. Some of them were high-anxiety learners and others were low-anxiety students. The reliability indices were high. They ranged from .648 (the reliability coefficient of the control group's responses to the motivational intensity questionnaire) to .812 (the reliability coefficient of the control group's responses to the anxiety questionnaire). The construct validity of the three questionnaires was also high. The coefficient ranged from .673 (the construct validity of the experimental group's responses to the anxiety questionnaire) to .762 (the construct validity of the experimental group's responses to the motivational intensity questionnaire).

Groups' equality was investigated using independent sample t-test. The aim was to investigate whether the apparent differences between the means of the control and experimental groups in the three questionnaires were statistically significant. Table 2 gives the t-values, the degree of freedoms (*df*), and the significance level.

Table 2 Independent sample t-test for the differences between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the first week

Questionnaire	Group	n	df	t	p<
Motivational Intensity	Control	81			
	Experimental	78	157	.169	.866
Anxiety	Control	81	157	10.063	.0001
	Experimental	78			
Self-esteem	Control	81	157	1.435	.153
	Experimental	78			

Before starting the experimental group's self-assessment in oral presentation tasks, there were no statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups in their self-esteem and the intensity of their motivation to learn the foreign language. However, the level of foreign language classroom anxiety was statistically lower in the case of the control group. Although both groups showed at the beginning a high level of anxiety, the experimental group's level of anxiety was statistically higher than that of the control group.

After the experimental group had experienced self-assessment of their oral presentations, the motivational intensity, the foreign language classroom anxiety, and the self-esteem of both groups were reassessed.

Table 3 below displays the means, standard deviations, and reliability and validity coefficients of subjects' scores on the questionnaires completed in the fifteenth week.

Table 3 Means, standard deviations, and reliability and validity coefficients of participants' scores on the fifteenth week's questionnaires of Motivational Intensity, Anxiety, and Self-esteem

Questionnaire	Group	Mean	SD	α	Validity coefficient
Motivational Intensity	Control	51.83	6.67	.812	.745
	Experimental	60.51	6.95	.806	.805
Anxiety	Control	115.95	24.82	.829	.735
	Experimental	129.29	27.40	.769	.719
Self-esteem	Control	54.06	26.28	.699	.835
	Experimental	64.31	16.29	.715	.862

The increment in subjects' motivation to learn the foreign language and their self-esteem is evident in both groups. The level of foreign language classroom anxiety decreased also in both groups. Now, the motivation level of both groups points more toward learners with high motivational intensity. Also, they could be categorized as low-anxiety learners and students with relatively high self-esteem. The high standard deviations in the subjects' scores on the anxiety and self-esteem questionnaires are expected since not all learners would equally develop a high self-esteem and work on lowering their classroom anxiety. The reliability and construct validity indices were higher than those obtained from the questionnaires in their first administration. In order to investigate whether there were statistically significant differences between the control and experimental means on the questionnaires, an independent sample t-test was utilized. The t-values are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4 Independent sample t-test for the differences between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the fifteenth week

Questionnaire	Group	n	df	t	p<
Motivational Intensity	Control	81			
	Experimental	78	157	8.035	.0001
Anxiety	Control	81			
	Experimental	78	157	3.221	.002
Self-esteem	Control	81			
	Experimental	78	157	2.959	.004

The mean of the experimental group on the motivational intensity questionnaire was statistically higher than that of the control group. This means that subjects in the experimental group were more motivated to learn the foreign language than those in the control group. The consideration of foreign language classroom anxiety is interesting. At the beginning of the study, the control groups' subjects were significantly lower in their anxiety than those in the experimental group. Later, the anxiety of subjects in the experimental group was significantly lower than that of their counterparts in the control group. The mean of the experimental group on the self-esteem questionnaire was significantly higher than that of the control group. In general, it is obvious that learners in the experimental group are now more motivated to learn the foreign language, have more self-esteem, and experience less foreign language classroom anxiety compared to those in the control group.

Since both groups revealed a change in their personality and psychological traits after fifteen weeks of instruction, the differences between the means of both groups at the beginning and end of the study were considered. A paired sample t-test was calculated as is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Paired sample t-test for the differences between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the first and fifteenth weeks

Questionnaire	Group	n	df	t	p<
Motivational Intensity	Control	81	80	5.792	.0001
	Experimental	78	77	10.715	.0001
Anxiety	Control	81	80	11.971	.0001
	Experimental	78	77	21.187	.0001
Self-esteem	Control	81	80	1.263	.210
	Experimental	78	77	6.557	.0001

The table shows that both groups, control and experimental, increased their motivational intensity and decreased their classroom anxiety. When subjects' levels of self-esteem were considered at the beginning and end of instruction, only the experimental group showed an increment in the level of their self-esteem. In the case of the control group, there was no statistically significant difference in their first and second means on the self-esteem questionnaire which indicates that there was no significant change at that level. Since both groups expedited a change or improvement, the statistical significance of the differences in gains were calculated by three methods.

Following Cohen (1977) and Rodrigo et al., (2004) two statistics were used: independent sample t-test and effect sizes (d).⁴³ Then, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed for the differences in gains between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires. Table 6 displays these pieces of information.

Table 6 Means, standard deviations, mean difference (MD), and effect sizes (d) for the differences in gains between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the first and fifteenth weeks

Questionnaire	Group	Mean	SD	MD	d
Motivational Intensity	Control	10.98	16.95	9.07	2.409
	Experimental	19.98	16.47		
Anxiety	Control	32.09	24.13	25.60	4.737
	Experimental	57.69	24.05		
Self-esteem	Control	3.79	27.05	9.04	1.823
	Experimental	12.84	17.29		

According to Cohen, an effect size of 0.2 is considered a small effect, 0.5 a medium effect, and 0.8 a large effect.⁴⁴ By considering Table 6, the effect sizes were large, ranging from 1.823 (self-esteem) to 4.737 (anxiety). The mean differences between the experimental group's means before and after instruction were higher than those of the control group. To measure whether the observed mean differences were statistically significant, an independent sample t-test was utilized, as displays in Table 7.

Table 7 Independent sample t-test for the differences in gains between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the first and fifteenth weeks

Questionnaire	Group	n	df	t	p<
Motivational Intensity	Control	81	157	3.418	.001
	Experimental	78			
Anxiety	Control	81	157	6.699	.0001
	Experimental	78			
Self-esteem	Control	81	157	2.500	.013
	Experimental	78			

According to the t-values reported in the table, the experimental group's gain was significantly higher than that of the control group. The largest gain was in lowering foreign language classroom anxiety and the smallest one

was in raising the level of self-esteem. Finally, ANOVA for the differences in gains between the experimental and control groups was computed, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Analysis of Variance for the differences in gains between the scores of the control and experimental groups on the three questionnaires administered in the first and fifteenth weeks

Gain	Source	SS	MS	df	F	p<
Motivational Intensity	Between Groups	3266.840	3266.840	1	11.686	.001
	Within Groups	43890.116	279.555	157		
	Total	47156.956		158		
Anxiety	Between Groups	26040.706	26040.706	1	44.875	.0001
	Within Groups	91106.171	580.294	157		
	Total	117146.877		158		
Self-esteem	Between Groups	3247.635	3247.635	1	6.252	.013

Again the F-values for the differences in gain between the two groups were statistically significant. It is obvious that although both groups displayed a positive change, the gain or positive change of the experimental group was statistically significantly higher than that of the control group. It seems that allowing foreign language learners to practice the task of self-assessment results in increasing their motivation level to learn the foreign language, raising their self-esteem, and lowering their foreign language classroom anxiety.

V. Conclusions

The findings of this study add more insights to the literature on self-assessment. It has been demonstrated in the literature that self-assessment is a reliable and valid process. This study adds that it could be used for pedagogical purposes. It is well known that foreign language learners would gain more if they are highly motivated to learn the foreign language, have a high level of self-esteem, and also have a lower level of foreign language classroom anxiety. It was found that although both groups expedited a positive change, the gain of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. It seems that practicing self-assessment of oral production yielded these favorable results. The largest gain was in lowering foreign language classroom anxiety. This seems reasonable since learners were given the opportunity to practice the assessment process, discuss it with their classmates, and compare its results to those of their instructors. The findings here are in accordance with the recent trend in foreign language pedagogy which calls for

classrooms and learning to be student-centered rather than instructor-centered. The learner is not to be viewed as being merely a passive recipient of information; but rather as being an active one. S/he has a say in what is presented to her/him and how her/his performance is being assessed and evaluated.

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