

EMPLOYING A SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC ON THE EFL STUDENTS' WRITING ACTIVITIES: IS IT EFFECTIVE?

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Abstract: Self-assessment is the process of students evaluating their work. It can help students learn a language better in writing class. This study aims to investigate the impact of self-assessment on EFL students' writing performance. To this end, the study used a post-test quasi-experimental design. The study included 72 respondents. The experimental group consisted of 36 students who used a self-assessment rubric, while the control group consisted of 36 students who used a conventional assessment. The data were collected using a test. The data were analyzed using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney method utilizing SPSS version 24. The findings show a significant difference in scores between students who self-assess and those who do not. The Mann-Whitney U test result shows sig. 2 tailed is 0,015, meaning the p-value is less than alpha. The alternative hypothesis is accepted based on the U test result. The findings also show that students are aware of their responsibility and can identify their own writing's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, promoting self-assessment as a method for improving student writing performance is advised.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Writing Performance

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the primary English language skills that are critical in the field of education. It serves a vital communicative and academic function. "Writing is the basic foundation of education and a prerequisite skill for all academic disciplines", (Heffernan, Linclon & Atwirl, 2001). Writing is a necessary English language skill for EFL students to master. They develop this ability to communicate ideas, emotions, persuade, and convey meaning to others through written form. To acquire and improve their writing skills, students frequently engage in academic work. They are frequently required to provide definitions of keywords and phrases to demonstrate the materials following the learning objectives.

This study proposes a self-assessment model to assist teachers in teaching writing and students in improving their writing performance. According to McNamara (2000), Self-assessment is the process by which students learn to evaluate their performance. It enables learners to monitor their progress and accurately assess their level of language proficiency (Lam, 2010). Brown and Hudson (1998) emphasize the benefits of self-assessment, including its speed, direct involvement of students, promotion of autonomy, and increased motivation as a result of using self-involvement in the learning process. Ross (1999) discovered that students appreciated self-evaluation because it clarified expectations and provided good feedback for students to use to improve the quality of their work. Students reported that with the aid of self-assessment, they could focus on areas for improvement rather than the final grade they received because they were already familiar with the criteria for evaluating a piece of writing. In summary, self-assessment can encourage students to participate actively in their education and improve the quality of their work.

A plethora of previous studies has looked into the use of self-assessment on students' writing assignments. Heidarian (2016) investigated the impact of using self-assessment on the writing of Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) students. The researcher discovered that using self-assessment as an assessment method is an effective instructional technique and a useful evaluation instrument for improving students' writing ability. According to

Fung and Mei (2015), self-assessment has a significant impact on students' writing performance and their sense of autonomy in their learning. Another study conducted by Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018) discovered that self-assessment impacts students' independence and ability to write effectively.

According to the findings of previous studies, using a self-assessment model has had a positive impact on students' writing performance. On the other hand, those studies were conducted prior to the outbreak of pandemic covid-19, when the majority of teaching and learning took place face-to-face. Regarding the impact of SA on student writing performance during Pandemic Covid-19, there has only been a limited amount of discussion. This study was carried out during pandemic covid-19 among students majoring in English as a foreign language. Consequently, the primary goal of this study is to determine whether or not self-assessment practice has a positive impact on improving students' writing skills, particularly in the writing of descriptive paragraphs. Thus, this study aims to investigate the effects of self-assessment on the writing performance of EFL students.

METHOD

The study employed a quasi-experimental design with only a post-test design. In order to achieve this, the sample for the study was carefully selected in accordance with the study's objectives. The students who participated in the study were second semester students majoring in English as a foreign language and taking a paragraph writing course. The students were divided into two groups: the experimental group, which consisted of 36 students, and the control group, which consisted of the same number of students. Depending on the scenario of the study, they were treated differently. The experimental group received treatment in the form of a self-assessment rubric, which they used in their writing activities.

Meanwhile, the students in the controlled group did not receive the self-assessment model; instead, they were guided by the teacher's feedback throughout their writing activities. The students

in both groups, experimental and control, were given a post-test, which served as the primary instrument of the study after they had received treatment in a series of meetings. The results of the test were analyzed with the help of the SPSS version 24 software. The Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests were used to determine whether or not the data obtained from the test were normally distributed.

RESULTS

The results of the normality and Mann Whitney U tests are presented in this section. The data was analyzed using SPSS 24 version statistical packages. Table 01 displays the results of the normality test utilizing Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk.

Table 01 The Result of Test of Normality

		Tests of Normality					
Class		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Students' Writing Scores	Experimental Class	0.240	36	0.000	0.870	36	0.001
	Controlled Class	0.222	36	0.000	0.902	36	0.004
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

According to Table 01, the result of the normality test indicates that the signification (p -value) $\leq \alpha$ (0.05), p 0,000 $\leq \alpha$ (0.05), and the p value is less than the alpha signification value. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the data are not normally distributed. In accordance with the normality test result, the Mann Whitney U test is recommended as a non-parametric alternative for hypothesis testing.

To test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in scores between students who employed self-assessment and those who do not using self-assessment. The Mann Whitney U test was used to calculate the data. Table 02 summarizes the results of the ranks test, while Table 03 summarizes the results of the Mann Whitney U test.

Table 02 The Result of Ranks

		Ranks		
Class		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Students' Writing Class	Experimental Class	36	42.21	1519,50
	Controlled Class	36	30.79	1108,50
	Total	72		

Table 02 summarizes the results of the two groups' rankings. It demonstrates that the experimental class's mean rank is 42.21, while the control group's mean rank is 30.79. This indicates that the experimental group's mean rank, 42.21, is greater than the controlled group's mean rank, 30.79.

Table 03 The result of Test Statistics (Mann-Whitney test)

Test Statistics ^a	
Students' Writing Class	
Mann-Whitney U	442,500
Wilcoxon W	1108,500
Z	-2,423
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,015
a. Grouping Variable: Class	

The Mann-Whitney U test result in Table 03 indicates that the sig. 2 tailed is 0.015, indicating that the p value is less than the alpha value.

Considering the rejection criteria (sig. $p > 0.05$), this means that the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that there is no significant difference in scores between students who self-assess and those

who do not self-assess cannot be accepted. Following that, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, stating that there is a significant difference in scores between students who self-assess and those who do not self-assess.

DISCUSSIONS

The normality test revealed that the data in this study are not normally distributed. There are several possible explanations for why the data is not normally distributed, one of which is the presence of outliers. According to GhoZali (2016), outliers are data that exhibit unique characteristics that appear to be distinct from other observations and manifest as extreme values, either for a single variable or a combination of variables. This study discovered an outlier in the students' performance. There are some outliers, which indicate that the data are not normally distributed. If outliers are removed, the data can be normally distributed. However, in the context of this study, outliers are not eliminated. The researcher switches to an analysis method that does not require data to be normal. The non-parametric method is used to compare the group's mean scores, ensuring that all outliers are taken into account and that the scores accurately reflect real students' writing performance.

The study's findings indicate that students are capable of evaluating their own writing products. This implies that students are accountable for their own learning processes, particularly when it comes to writing activities. This study corroborated the findings of a previous study conducted by Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018), which found that students developed a growing sense of responsibility for evaluating their work and learned to judge it according to the task requirements. Students are aware that they must take responsibility for their own learning by planning, managing, and reflecting on what they should study to improve their writing performance.

Additionally, this study demonstrates that students can identify their own writing's strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment. They can revise their writing in this context by referring to their previous writing's weaknesses. Heidarian (2016) discovered that by utilizing self-assessment, students are motivated to identify and practice their errors in order to avoid repeating them in

subsequent writing assignments. The current study's findings also corroborate previous research by Chye, et al (2014), which demonstrated that self-assessment checklists assist learners in diagnosing their own weaknesses and improving their writing performance. Thus far, self-assessment checklists have been regarded as beneficial tools for assisting students in becoming better.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that self-assessment rubric use requires additional practice and guidance. This is consistent with the writing theory, which views writing as a process. According to Brown (2001:331), writing is a planned process that allows for unlimited revisions prior to publication. Additionally, Nunan (1989:36) states that the process approach to writing views composition as an act, which can be developed through writing practice and effective activities that also serve as good inputs to help students improve their writing ability. Therefore, in practice, when students use a self-assessment checklist as part of their writing activity, the teacher should guide them through the process of using the self-assessment checklist. Additionally, providing additional writing activities or practice will assist students in improving their writing performance through self-assessment.

Moreover, the study discovered that self-assessment has an effect on students' writing ability. This study discovered a significant difference in scores between students who self-assess and those who do not self-assess. This finding corroborates the findings of Fung and Mei (2015), who discovered that self-assessment has a significant effect on students' argumentative group essay writing performance. Heidarian (2016) discovered a statistically significant increase in learners' use of writing processes due to the self-assessment method, and that their writing has developed. Additionally, according to a study conducted by Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012), self-assessment helps learners become autonomous in their writing and improves their writing ability. The study concludes that writing classes that incorporate self-assessment effectively improve students' writing performance than classes that use conventional assessment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, there is a significant difference between the scores of students treated by self-assessment and those treated by conventional assessment. Thus, if the students writing activity is assisted with self-assessment rubrics, their writing performance is better. Furthermore, the research findings show that using self-assessment in reading activity could aid the students to be able to assess their writing by identifying their weaknesses and strengths and by which they work on it. The use of self-assessment also could improve the students writing quality.

The study's findings suggest that the teachers should use a self-assessment rubric to improve the students writing performance. In doing this, the teacher should guide and provide more practice for the students in employing a self-assessment rubric in their writing activities.

Furthermore, future researchers should investigate the use of a self-assessment rubric in the students writing activity by involving more samples and across writing genres to gain more comprehensive findings of employing a self-assessment rubric in a writing activity.

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