Qom Branch
Islamic Azad University

Research Article

Improving Speaking Competence through Self-Talk: A Diary Study of an Iranian EFL Learner

Farhad Khabazian[1] ✉, Seyyed Hossein Kashef[2] ✉

[1] Department of English Language, Urmia Branch, Islamic Azad University, Urmia, Iran
[2] Department of English Language, Urmia Branch, Islamic Azad University, Urmia, Iran (**Corresponding author**)

Abstract

Although there have been numerous studies investigating the role of self-talk in the literature, no research, to date, investigated diaries of an EFL learner who used these techniques to clarify how self-talk can aid EFL learners to improve their speaking competence without language partners in a real context. The present study was a qualitative diary case study. The researchers attempted to use participant's diaries and transcriptions of his self-talk tasks to figure out how self-talk aided Mahan (participant's first name) to improve his speaking competence eight months. The participant was an Iranian male EFL learner at the age of 22. His mother tongue was Azeri and he was an advanced level EFL learner. The participant took English classes for seven years. But his speaking practice was only limited to classroom context. Mahan failed his advanced level term due to his poor speaking competence. The participant was trained to use self-talk in his EFL classes and outside his EFL contexts to ameliorate his speaking competence and he consented to do so for eight months. Going through the diary entries, the researchers came up with two emerging themes namely: Mahan's two *I positions* based on Dialogical Self Theory were in agreement with each other and Mahan's both *I positions* were in disagreement with each other. As a result, his speaking competence significantly improved during this period of time. The findings offer implications for L2 researchers and teachers.

Keywords: diary study, fluency, IELTS speaking, self-assessment, speaking competence, self-talk

1. Introduction

A particular type of intrapersonal communication is self-talk (Ayni et al., 2025; Vocate, 2012). Self-talk is defined as "Self-directed or self-referent speech (either silent or aloud) that serves a variety of self-regulatory and other functions" (Brinthaupt, 2019, para. 7). Some scholars have different perspectives on the definition of self-talk (e.g., Bunker et al., 1993; Theodorakis et al., 2001; Goffena, et al., 2025; Hardy et al., 1996). Among these scholars, Theodorakis et al. (2000) defined self-talk as "what people say to themselves either out loud or as a small voice inside their head" (p.754). Self-talk (Orvell et al., 2021) has various models such as silent talk, out loud talk, private speech, and inner speech. These models can aid foreign language learners to produce better-quality responses for classroom speaking tasks, interviews, and interpersonal communications with native and non-native speakers who utter that target language (Molnar, 2025; Zhou et al., 2021).

According to Daly et al. (1995), positive self-talk strategies can aid students to achieve and maintain high levels of fluency. On the other hand, negative self-talk can cause cognitive anxiety (Hatzigeorgiadis & Biddle, 2008) for EFL learners. Negative self-talk can demotivate students. These negative feelings (e.g., anxiety, stress) can act like Krashen's affective feelings for EFL learners (Du, 2009). In a similar vein, Borrajo et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, stress, and negative self-talk in runners. The findings of this study have revealed that stress and emotional intelligence are related to the use of negative self-talk.

Self-talk research has always been so popular in numerous domains of developmental (e.g., Diaz & Berk, 2014; Naderirad et al., 2024; Rose et al., 2022), educational (e.g., Deniz, 2009), and clinical (e.g., Schwartz & Caramoni, 1989; Theodorakis et al., 2001) psychology (Oleś et al., 2020) and several other domains that self-talk research has played an important role. While the importance of the self-talk in learning process is well recognized (Ayni et al., 2025), it is essential to acknowledge the role that teachers' self-efficacy plays in enhancing students' language ability (Khabazian & Kashef, 2025). The Self-Talk Scale (STS) measures various kinds of self-reported self-talk (e.g., self-criticism, self-reinforcement, self-management, and social assessment) which are used for both positive and negative conditions (Brinthaupt et al., 2009).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Dialogical Self Theory

Dialogical Self Theory studies the self as a "society of mind". It is neither a mini-theory nor a grand theory, but rather a "bridging theory" (Hermans, 2023). Furthermore, it crosses the divisive bounds of disciplines and subdisciplines so that new and unexpected linkages between these disciplines are created (Hermans & Gieser, 2011). In a world that is increasingly interconnected and globalized, individual and social roles become increasingly dense, heterogeneous, and even conflicting. Based on Dialogical Self Theory, the individuals shift from one I-position to another I-position in a dialogical self (Meijers & Hermans, 2018).

In order to have self-talk, learners should take at least two points of view or two *I positions* as *I position* 1 and *I position* 2 (Weintraub, 2024). This is the main perspective of Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans & Gieser, 2011). Even learners can name these *I positions*. From another perspective, according to Hermans (2002), "The Dialogical Self works as a society with oppositions, conflicts, negotiation, cooperation and coalition between *I positions*. As society becomes more heterogenous, more relatively autonomous spatial domains emerge in the self" (p. 147). Self-assessment is one of the most impactful processes in student learning (Otero-Saborido et al., 2021). A foreign language learner's self-assessment is a supportive and practical task for foreign language learners. Self-assessment is a vital part of the learner-centered approach (Qasem, 2020).

In the present study, the participant used his recorded utterances and their transcriptions to correct his possible mistakes. The participant could only recognize and correct his mistakes not errors. According to Amara (2015), mistakes can be corrected by foreign language learners but errors need learning. Mistakes can be made due to carelessness or poor judgment (Brown, & Lee, 2015). However, an error is a deviation from accuracy (Schemper, 2003).

In this study, the participant was asked to use two *I positions* based on Diological Self Theory. This theory aided the participant to have intrapersonal communication and explained his different points of view about various IELTS speaking standard questions. The present diary study was guided by the following research question on a student's self-talk and self-assessment diaries.

RQ: How can self-talk aid an Iranian EFL learner to improve his speaking competence?

3. Method

3.1. Design

A qualitative case study is the design of the present study. A diary case study is a research method that collects qualitative information and data by having participants record their language learning experiences (Dörnyei, 2007). Furthermore, a diary study can be completed according to the participant's schedules, this approach allows for great flexibility in qualitative research (Mackey, & Gass, 2015). In this type of study, research questions should interest researchers and participants (Hatch, & Lazaraton, 1991). Therefore, the present study's research question captured researchers' presuppositions and fascinated the participant.

3.2. Participant

Mahan, an adult male EFL learner, consented to participate in this study. The participant provided informed consent to participate in the study, indicating his voluntary agreement to take part in the research. His mother tongue was Azeri, and he was a 22-year-old Iranian EFL learner. Mahan took part in EFL classes in the Aflakian Institute for many years. Despite his active participation in English language classes doing his homework and cooperating with his classmates and instructors, his speaking competence as well as his other skills and subskills did not improve. He could not enhance his speaking ability for five years and failed his Advanced level final exam only because of poor results on the speaking subsection, and this issue is not specific to Mahan. Because of the limited teaching time to have face-to-face conversations, it is a common challenge among language learners in Iran. The researchers, as his EFL instructors, had two meetings with him to figure out his problem and to find out why there was a gap between his speaking score and his other skills scores (e.g., reading, writing, and listening). Mahan in these friendly meetings mentioned that he could not improve his speaking because he did not have enough chance to speak English in his classes for several semesters. He further explained that in his class there were 15 students and each student could only participate in a few speaking tasks for approximately twenty minutes during a term. Unfortunately, he did not have friends or partners who could aid him with face-to-face conversation out of the classroom context. It is worth mentioning that, unlike second language learning, foreign language learning input and output are limited to classroom context (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

3.3. Instruments

In this qualitative research, Herman's Dialogical Self Theory was utilized to clarify important aspects of the theory for the participant. The

Participant's audio transcriptions were used for data analysis. Furthermore, the researchers used the self-talk logs/notes, Mahan's self-corrections, and the audio-taped talks. The researchers extracted 42 sample entries from the participant's self-talk transcriptions and used them in the present study (Appendix B).

3.4. Procedure

3.4.1. Self-talk and the Participant's *I position* Perspectives

The researchers, as his EFL instructors, suggested that Mahan initiate using self-talk and self-assessment to improve his speaking ability. For this purpose, the participant was asked to use IELTS standard questions (Cullen et al., 2014) and tried to answer these questions several times (each time explaining a new aspect of the question). The participant answered numerous standard series of IELTS questions (Appendix A). Then he was supposed to contemplate either self-criticism or self-confirmation as I position 2. For some speaking tasks, both of the participant's *I positions* confirmed each other and each explained new aspects about related questions. For other speaking tasks, Mahan's *I positions* were not on the same page and rejected each other.

3.4.2. Self-assessment in Self-talk

To have self-assessment, the participant was asked to record his utterances and then listened to his answers to correct his possible mistakes. Furthermore, in this process, Mahan frequently received feedback from his EFL instructors. For this purpose, the participant recorded and transcribed his self-talk tasks for both of his *I positions*. Mahan had out loud self-talk for each IELTS speaking topic and questions that were chosen for him by researchers. Before answering each question, participant had inner self-talk in order to practice and prepare himself for out loud self-talk. By listening to his utterances, he could observe how well he progressed and enhanced his speaking ability during these months.

3.5. Data Analysis

The criteria for the analysis of the data in the study were fluency, grammatical accuracy, rate of speech, coherence, and pronunciation. Because of using the self-talk strategy in this period, he could utter sentences with acceptable fluency, accuracy, and coherence. In the current study thematic data analysis was employed to identify the primary themes arising from Mahan's self-talk interactions and transcriptions.

4. Results

The participant's two *I positions* had different views and for some tasks agreed with each other and for some other questions these *I positions* were not on the same side. Investigating the diary entries, the researchers came up with two emerging themes: Mahan's two *I positions* were in agreement with each other and Mahan's two other *I positions* were in disagreement with each other.

4.1. Agreements Between Mahan's Two *I Positions*

For some speaking tasks, the participant's *I position* 1 and *I position* 2 confirmed each other. They both supplied an opinion about the research questions. To illustrate their ideas, they clarified their points of view and provided examples.

Table 1
Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-confirmation), Extract No. 1 (Data 17)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
How useful will English be to you in your future?	I think English will play an important role in my future. As I want to study computer science and become a famous software engineer, this language is very worthwhile for me. We all know English is the language of computer and Internet and for people who want to work as computer engineers English is a practical language.	I think you are right. I accept that English will be very useful for me in the future. In the future, people who don't know the English language will be considered illiterate. English is important in all fields and as I want to work with computer apps like Java, learning English should be my first priority.

Extract No. 1 illustrated that the participant as *I position* 1 confirmed that English will be important for his future. *I position* 2 was in agreement with the first *I position* in that English is crucial. Each of them provided reasons and examples about their points of view. Before answering these questions, the participant had inner self-talk to prepare himself for out loud self-talk. After recording his utterances, he listened to his answers to find out about his possible mistakes. He also transcribed them in order to modify his output.

Table 2

Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-confirmation), Extract No. 2 (Data 19)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
How do expensive items that younger people want to buy differ from those that older people want to buy?	For young people, appearance matters more than anything else. Because of that, they prefer to buy expensive items that are somehow attractive and eye-catching. For example, my friend wants to look handsome and attract someone's attention, so he prefers famous brands that are usually more expensive than others. In that way, he thinks that he looks different. But for older people, appearance is not really important anymore. They just prefer to buy cheap items. They don't care how they look like or what others think about them.	I feel that way too. I think that for older people quality is more important than other factors like items brands or beauty. They prefer to buy things that can work for a long time. But younger people like expensive brands to brag about these items, especially in front of their friends.

Table 3

Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-confirmation), Extract No. 3 (Data 42)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
Do you think that it's better to talk to friends, not family about problems?	No, I don't think so. Our family members like father and mother are our best friends. They always care about us and we can trust them because we know they love us. For example, I always talk to my brother about my problems and he always helps me with all his heart. That's why I trust my brother more than my friends.	I think that way too. Family provides not only basic needs for us but also emotional needs. We can always count on them when we face problems. I don't mean that we shouldn't talk with our friends about problems. But when it comes to choosing between family members and friends, I definitely choose my family to talk about my problems.

Extract No. 2 and 3 indicate how participant's *I position* 2 validates his *I position* 1 by adding examples and further explanations about related questions. In order to have longer out-loud self-talk, participants can have even more than two *I positions* each can have a different point of view about a topic by using "I think that way too."

4.2. Disagreements between Mahan's both *I Positions*

Another function of self-talk that the present study focused on was self-criticism or self-disagreement. Participant's *I positions* had different opinions about some questions. In this type, *I position* 2 tried to reject claims and opinions that *I position* 1 mentioned earlier. Extract No. 4 and 5 are examples of this type.

Table 4
Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-disagreement), Extract No. 4 (Data 31)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
Do you think that people are more likely to buy expensive items for their friends or themselves?	I think it depends on how close they are to their friends. People usually buy expensive items for their close friends and loved ones. And the reason is that they want to show their love and respect to their friends. Especially when close friends invite them to their birthday party or wedding ceremony, they are expected to buy expensive and valuable gifts. With these expensive gifts, people want to show they care about their friends and their friendship matters.	Well, I'm afraid I disagree with you. Nowadays, people are more likely to buy expensive items for themselves because buying these expensive items is a way of saving money for them. Like they buy a piece of jewelry and later when they need money, they can sell these items. But if they buy expensive items for their friends, it's not saving anymore. That's why they prefer to buy cheap gifts for their friends.

In order to answer the above question, self-disagreement was used. Mahan's two *I positions* had different views. His first *I position* confirmed that people buy expensive items for their friends. But as *I position* 2 he rejected the idea by uttering "Well, I'm afraid I disagree." He further mentioned that people prefer to buy expensive items for themselves.

In Extract No. 5 and 6, Mahan's *I positions* had two different views. As it was tangible, participant's *I position* 2 did not accept the first *I position's* opinions. These two *I positions* supported their own perspectives with various explanations and providing examples to support their claims.

Table 5
Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-disagreement), Extract No. 5 (Data 26)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
Is it always necessary to work hard in order to achieve career success?	I don't think that working hard is the only factor to achieve career success. Hard working can play important role but other factors including talent, background knowledge are crucial for work success. For example, a civil engineer, who is really skillful, can design maps easier than engineers who don't have enough background knowledge about this field.	Well, with all respect I disagree with you. Let me explain my reason. I think it's always necessary to work hard if we want to achieve success. If we are first in our career, then we are first. But if we are second, we are nothing in that field. I believe that discipline and hard work can help us to manage our time and become one of the best workers in our field.

Table 6
Participant's Sample Self-talk (Self-disagreement), Extract No. 6 (Data 37)

Question	I position 1	I position 2
Who should pay for scientific research-government or private companies?	Of course, private companies should pay for scientific research. The reason is that these studies can help companies to earn a lot of money. Well, for example, medical companies invest in research areas related to their field and then produce medicine for illnesses. In this way, they can earn money. But I should say that they don't invest money in all kinds of research. They just pay for scientific research that is worthwhile for the company.	But I don't think so. Governments should invest and pay for scientific research because these studies can help countries improve their economies. For example, paying for research related to agriculture or technology. Another reason is that we can't trust companies. They may not be honest with people. Let me give an example, some products are harmful for people and environment but companies may still work on these products because of money.

4.3. Mahan's Results of Final Exams

The total score of the final exam was 100 in Aflakian's advanced level final exam. Each skill's maximum score was 25. The minimal score required to pass the test at the Aflakian Institute was 70. Students were expected to get at least 70 to pass the advanced-level exam. In the speaking part of the exam in Aflakian, the students are supposed to answer questions in a face-to-face interaction with their EFL instructor. Furthermore, in the speaking section, the

learners' fluency, grammatical accuracy, rate of speech, coherence, and pronunciation are examined. Students who do not meet the required standards for these criteria in the speaking exam fail in their final assessment. EFL learners must perform adequately across all skills to achieve the overall passing score. After failing this level, during the next term Mahan used self-talk and self-assessment to improve his speaking competence. After eight months of using these techniques, his speaking ameliorated considerably. He could pass his final exam. Table 7 shows participant's former and later final exams scores and how participant's speaking score changed. He could pass the final exam with a score of 79, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of his self-talk learning strategy.

Table 7
Mahan's Results of his Final Exams

Language Skills	Failed Term	Passed Term
Reading	21	20
Listening	15	18
Speaking	10	21
Writing	20	20
Total	66	79

5. Discussion

The findings of the present study revealed that if EFL learners do not have interpersonal communication and face-to-face conversation with native or non-native people to improve their speaking competence (Fritsch et al., 2024) as Mahan, and his speaking practice is only limited to classroom activities, they can shift to intrapersonal communication (e.g., silent self-talk, out loud self-talk) in order to enhance their speaking competence. As an example of this case, the diarist, Mahan, had poor results in his advanced-level final exam and failed the exam only because of his speaking score of the exam. There was a gap between his speaking score and other skills scores (e.g., reading, writing, and listening).

After having two meetings with Mahan, the researchers, as his EFL instructors, advised him to have daily speaking practice by applying self-talk and self-assessment. The participant was supposed to answer IELTS Standard speaking questions several times, each time covering new aspects. The participant had two *I positions* so that he could have self-talk. After this period (i.e., eight months), the participant and the researchers could observe his speaking improvement. As a result of this experience, his fluency and accuracy enhanced and he could pass his final exam with a high score. Investigating the diary entries, the researchers came up with two emerging themes: Mahan's two

I positions in agreement with each other and Mahan's two *I positions* in disagreement with each other.

The findings of the study are supported by Ayni et al. (2025) in which the participants' speaking through self-talk practice improved and self-talk learning aided the participants in organizing thoughts as well as providing positive reinforcement during speaking activities. Similarly, Alnaeem (2025) reported the power of self-talk for speaking anxiety reduction among EFL learners. The findings of the study (Alnaeen, 2025) indicated that the participants had either a moderate or a high frequency of self-talk and it affected their speaking anxiety reduction.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Applying self-talk and self-assessment techniques can aid EFL learners who want to improve their speaking ability on their own (Racy & Morin, 2024). If EFL learners do not have friends to communicate with them in the target language, they can have a friend in their own mind and practice with that new *I position*. This research investigated self-talk and self-assessment through a diary study. More research could be done to investigate other types of intrapersonal communication (e.g., inner monologue) through EFL learner's diaries or other research methods and techniques. This study is not without its limitations. First of all, the study was based on the diaries of a single participant, Mahan. The insights and experiences may not represent the wider population of Iranian EFL learners. The subjectivity of self-reporting is another limitation of the present study. Mahan's self-reported data through diary entries may not completely capture the improvement of his speaking competence. Finally, the duration of the current study may not be sufficient to observe long-term changes in Mahan's speaking competence.

Acknowledgemnts

Reference

Alnaeem, L. A. (2025). The power of self-talk for speaking anxiety reduction among EFL learners. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies* (TPLS), *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1501.12

Amara, N. (2015). Errors correction in foreign language teaching. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education, 5*(3), 58-68.

Ayni, H. N., Rahmawati, H., & Nasihah, D. (2025). The Use of self-talk for speaking skill: An autobiographical narrative inquiry. *Journal Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Pembelajaran, 20*(1).

Borrajo, E., Calvete, E., & Urquijo, I. (2024). Negative self-talk in runners: Emotional intelligence and perceived stress as explanatory factors. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 70*, 102545. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2023.102545

Brinthaupt, T. M. (2019). Individual differences in self-talk frequency: Social isolation and cognitive disruption. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1088. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01088

Brinthaupt, T. M., Hein, M. B., & Kramer, T. E. (2009). The self-talk scale: Development, factor analysis, and validation. *Journal of personality assessment, 91*(1), 82-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890802484498

Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles*. Pearson.

Bunker, L., Williams, J. M., & Zinsser, N. (1993). Cognitive techniques for improving performance and building confidence. In J. M. Willaims (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (2nd ed.). Mayfield.

Cullen, P., French, A., & Jakeman, V. (2014). *The official Cambridge guide to IELTS student's book with answers with DVD-ROM*. Cambridge University Press.

Daly, D. A., Simon, C. A., & Burnett-Stolnack, M. (1995). Helping adolescents who stutter focus on fluency. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, *26*(2), 162-168. https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461.2602.162

Deniz, C. B. (2009). Early childhood teachers´ awareness beliefs and practices toward children´ s private speech. In A. Winsler, C. Fernyhough & I. Montero (Eds.), *Private speech, executive functioning, and the development of verbal self-regulation* (pp. 236-246). Cambridge University Press.

Diaz, R. M., Berk, L. E., & Diaz, R. (Eds.). (2014). *Private speech: From social interaction to self-regulation.* Psychology Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies.* Oxford University Press.

Du, X. (2009). The affective filter in second language teaching. *Asian Social Science, 5*(8), 162-165. https://10.5539/ass.v5n8p162

Fritsch, J., Nonnenmann, J., Engelmann, N., Latinjak, A. T., Hatzigeorgiadis, A., & Jekauc, D. (2024). Exploring proportions of spontaneous and goal-directed self-talk–It is not always the one or the other. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 75*, 102704.

Goffena, J. D. (2025). Self-regulated learning for self-talk: Applications for sport learning and performance. In J. Thibodeaux, J. L. Van Raalte, & Y. L. Dickens (Eds.), *Principles of self-talk in sport settings: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 163–177). *American Psychological Association.* http://doi.org/10.1037/0000434-010

Hardy, L., Jones, G., & Gould, D. (1996). *Understanding psychological preparation for sport: Theory and practice of elite performers*. Wiley.

Hatch, E. M., & Lazaraton, A. (1991*). The research manual: Design and statistics for applied linguistics.* Newbury House.

Hatzigeorgiadis, A., & Biddle, S. J. (2008). Negative self-talk during sport performance: Relationships with pre-competition anxiety and goal-performance discrepancies. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 31*(3), 237.

Hermans, H. J. (2002). The dialogical self as a society of mind*: Introduction. Theory & psychology, 12*(2), 147-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354302122001

Hermans, H. J. (2023). Dialogical self-theory. In V. P. Glăveanu (Ed.), *The Palgrave encyclopedia of the possible* (pp. 389-394). Springer International Publishing.

Hermans, H. J., & Gieser, T. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of dialogical self-theory.* Cambridge University Press.

Khabazian, F., & Kashef, S. H. (2025). Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy: Perspectives of Iranian female EFL teachers in building their teacher immunity. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture, 10*(2), 229-244. https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v10i2.3736

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2015). *Second language research: Methodology and design.* Routledge.

Meijers, F., & Hermans, H. (2018). *Dialogical self-theory in education: An introduction. The dialogical self-theory in education*: *A Multicultural Perspective*. Springer.

Molnar, J. A. (2025). Self-regulated learning in an online asynchronous EFL classroom in Japan: What strategies do students use? *International Journal of TESOL Studies, 7*(1), 48-69. https://doi.org/10.58304/ijts.20250104

Naderirad, N., Abdoli, B., Farsi, A., & Hassanlouei, H. (2024). The effect of instructional, motivational and self-selected self-talk on intrinsic motivation and accuracy of elbow joint position sense test. *Sport Psychology Studies, 13*(47), 49-62. https://doi.org/10.22089/spsyj.2021.11185.2221

Oleś, P. K., Brinthaupt, T. M., Dier, R., & Polak, D. (2020). Types of inner dialogues and functions of self-talk: Comparisons and implications. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 227. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00227

Orvell, A., Vickers, B. D., Drake, B., Verduyn, P., Ayduk, O., Moser, J., ... & Kross, E. (2021). Does distanced self-talk facilitate emotion regulation across a range of emotionally intense experiences? *Clinical Psychological Science, 9*(1), 68-78. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/2167702620951539

Otero-Saborido, F. M., Torreblanca-Martínez, V., & Gonzalez-Jurado, J. A. (2021). Systematic review of self-assessment in physical education. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(2), 766. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020766

Qasem, F. A. A. (2020). The effective role of learners' self-assessment tasks in enhancing learning English as a second language. *Arab World English Journal, 11*(3), 502-514. https://de.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no3.33

Racy, F., & Morin, A. (2024). Relationships between self-talk, inner speech, mind wandering, mindfulness, self-concept clarity, and self-Regulation in university students. *Behavioral Sciences, 14*(1), 55. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14010055

Rose, J., Pedrazzi, R., & Dombrowski, S. U. (2022). Examining dietary self-talk content and context for discretionary snacking behaviour: a qualitative interview study. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine, 10*(1), 399-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/21642850.2022.2053686

Schemper, M. (2003). Predictive accuracy and explained variation. *Statistics in medicine*, *22*(14), 2299-2308. https://doi.org/10.1002/sim.1486

Schwartz, R. M., & Caramoni, G. L. (1989). Cognitive balance and psychopathology: Evaluation of an information processing model of positive and negative states of mind. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *9*(3), 271-294. https://doi.org/10.1016/0272-7358(89)90058-5

Theodorakis, Y., Chroni, S., Laparidis, K., Bebestos, V., & Douma, I. (2001). Self-talk in a basketball-shooting task. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *92*(1), 309–315. https://doi.org/10.2466/PMS.92.1.309-315

Theodorakis, Y., Weinberg, R., Natsis, P., Douma, I., & Kazakas, P. (2000). The effects of motivational and instructional self-talk on improving motor performance. *The Sport Psychologist, 14*(3), 253–271. https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.14.3.253

Vocate, D. R. (2012). *Intrapersonal communication: Different voices, different minds.* Routledge.

Weintraub, L. (2024). Self-talk and self-Leadership: Advancing a new application of Goleman's leadership model for counseling college students. *The Scholarship Without Borders Journal, 2*(2), 1-19.

Zhou, P., Hedayatnia, B., Gopalakrishnan, K., Kim, S., Pujara, J., Ren, X., ... & Hakkani-Tur, D. (2021). Think before you speak: Learning to generate implicit knowledge for response generation by self-talk. In A. Papangelis, P. Budzianowski, B. Liu, E. Nouri, A. Rastogi, & Y.N. Chen, *Proceedings of the 3rd workshop on natural language processing for conversational AI* (pp. 251-253). Association for Computational Linguistics.

Appendix A

IELTS standard questions

1. Has your hometown changed in recent years?
2. The internet allows us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, it also isolates us and encourages people not to socialize. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?
3. what did you enjoy about being a school student?
4. Are there famous buildings in your hometown?
5. Do you prefer to watch a film at cinema or at home?
6. How should tourists behave when they are in a different country?
7. Do you think that people eat healthier food than they did in the past?
8. Which are more popular in your country: fast food restaurants or traditional restaurants? Why do you think that is?
9. Do you prefer writing with a pen or using a computer?
10. Have you always liked the same kind of music?
11. How important do you think it is to have good neighbors?
12. What kind of books do you read for pleasure?
13. Do you agree that old monuments and buildings should always be preserved?
14. Do you think that computers will replace human teachers?
15. How necessary is it for tourist to learn the language of the country they are visiting?
16. Is it important to you to have flowers and plants in your home?
17. How useful will English be to you in the future?
18. What kind of people are most famous in your country today?
19. How do expensive items that younger people want to buy differ from those that older people want to buy?
20. Why do you think children today might be better at science than their parents?
21. What job would you like to have ten years from now?
22. Will electronic books ever completely replace printed books in the future?
23. Is there anything you do not like about social media?
24. Do you think that successful people are always happy people?
25. How important is it for everyone to have a goal in their personal life?
26. Is it always necessary to work hard in order to achieve career success?
27. Is it important to like people you study with?

28. How important is it for companies to take all customer complaints seriously?
29. Do you think that people are more likely to buy expensive items for their friends or for themselves?
30. What kinds of computer games do people play in your country?
31. Do you prefer to email, phone, or text your friends?
32. Do you agree or disagree that many young people today want to be famous?
33. Who should pay for scientific research – government or private companies?
34. What are the most popular types of children's books in your country?
35. How much time do you spend on social media sites?
36. What are the most difficult jobs that people do?
37. Will large shopping malls continue to be popular, despite the growth of internet shopping?
38. Do you think that it's better to talk to friends and not family about problems?
39. Is it important to you to eat healthy food?
40. Do you think the theatre should be run as a business or as a public service?
41. Did you enjoy singing when you were younger? (Why? / Why not?)
42. Have the kinds of clothes you like changed in recent years?
43. Do you agree that schools should teach children how to manage money?
44. Do you think richer countries have a responsibility to help poorer countries?
45. Did you enjoy art lessons when you were a child?
46. Do you agree that the building people work in is more important than the colleagues they work with?
47. What would life be like if people didn't have to work?
48. When you visit other places, do you take photos or buy postcards?
49. What types of weather do people in your country dislike most?
50. Are there any important festivals in your country that celebrate a season or type of weather?
51. Will you watch more or fewer TV programs in the future?
52. Do you agree that many people nowadays are under pressure to work longer hours and take less holidays?
53. What is the impact on society of people having a poor work-life balance?

54. What is the best age for children to start computer lessons?
55. Which communication skills are most important when taking part in meetings with colleagues?
56. What are the possible effects of poor written communication skills at work?
57. What are the ways that social media can be used for positive purposes?
58. Why do some individuals post highly negative comments about other people on social media?
59. Why do some people find the internet addictive?
60. Do you think it's important to earn a large salary or to be happy in your job?
61. Do you think some people spend too much time on their computer these days? Why?
62. Pollution is a problem in many countries. What do you think governments can do about it?
63. Do you think that government should try to control internet or should people be able to write whatever they want?
64. Do you think newspapers and books will eventually disappear?
65. Who do you think has the most influence in your life: your family or your friends?
66. Describe a time that you helped someone. How did you help this person? Why?
67. Do most people live in houses or apartments in your country? why?
68. Would you say that your country is a good place to visit?
69. How do you feel about the amount of advertising on television?
70. To what extent are people influenced by advertising they see on television?
71. Why do people still enjoy going to cinema to watch a film?
72. Should film-makers be responsible for the impact their films have on people?
73. Is there a musical instrument that you would like to learn to play? (why?/ why not?)
74. Do you write more now or less than you did a few years ago? (why?)
75. Why do some shops provide better customer service than other people?
76. Why do people go to restaurants when they want to celebrate important occasions?

Appendix B

Mahan's Sample of Self-Talk Task with his Self-Assessment and Feedback

Extract No 37 (Data 37/ P97. IELTS General 15 → question was chosen.

Q. Who should pay for scientific research - government or private companies?

[I position 1] Of course private companies should pay for scientific research. The reason is that these researches can help companies to earn lots of money. Well, for example medical companies invest on researches related to their field and then produce drug for illnesses. In this way they can earn money. But of course they don't pay for all kinds of researches. They just pay for scientific researches that are worthwhile for the company.

[I position 2] But I don't think so. Governments should invest and pay for scientific researches. Because these researches can help the country. Like paying for researches related to agriculture or technology. Other reason is that we can't trust companies. they may not be honest with people. For example some drugs are harmful for people and environment and companies may still want to work on them for their own benefit. In Extract Data-37, participant's "I position 1 and 2" had different ideas about whether government or private companies should pay for scientific research. And Each supported his opinion with reasons and examples.

Extract No 78 (Data 38) P32. IELTS General 14 → question was chosen.

Q: What are the most popular types of children's books in your country?

[I position 1] Most popular types of children's books in my country are short novels with colorful pages. These books have best novels for children. These types of novels teach children basic things like being honest with others.

(I position 2) Yes, absolutely I agree with you. These colorful books are very useful for children and they are cheaper than other kinds of books. That's why these types of books are popular in Iran. Parents prefer to buy these kinds of books for their child. As it is clear in extract data 38 both I positions confirm that colorful short novels are popular books for children in Iran.

P19.