The Comparative Effect of Self, Peer, and Teacher Assessment in Speaking on EFL Learners' Autonomy

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Abstract

This study compared the effect of self-assessment (SA), peer assessment (PA), and teacher assessment (TA) in speaking on EFL learners' autonomy. For this purpose, 60 EFL learners were selected and divided into three groups, i.e., SA, PA, and TA. The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) was administered as a pretest. In each group, the relevant assessment procedure was used. After the termination of the treatment, the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire was given as a posttest. Using ANCOVA, the results revealed (a) there were significant differences among the three assessment types, (b) SA had the most significant influence on EFL learners' autonomy, and (c) TA had a more significant influence on EFL learners' autonomy than PA. The results can enable those engaged in the language teaching and learning process to possess a better perspective on EFL learners' autonomy, considering the impact of different types of assessment on EFL learners' speaking.

Keywords: Autonomy, Peer Assessment, Self-Assessment, Speaking, Teacher Assessment

1. Introduction

The emphasis of educational programs and curricula has historically tended to be on imparting knowledge and skills rather than teaching students how to learn (Thanh, 2019). Without regard to teaching students how to acquire the target language, the primary goal of language education was to impart language forms by posing the language items in carefully categorized steps (Ozer & Yukselir, 2023). However, as aptly

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stated by Nguyen and Tran (2018), the main problem is that the differences between learners are not only a result of their studying particular material and using various learning techniques and skills but also a result of the ways they have discovered about how to learn a specific language more successfully and efficiently. In reality, the most efficacious students are those who take the accountability of their own language learning (Tseng, et al., 2019).

According to Ding and Shen (2002), autonomy is the capacity of language students to contribute to, implement, observe, and evaluate their language learning. As Tseng et al. (2019) asserted, autonomous learners are essentially in charge of achieving their educational goals and managing their own learning processes. Additionally, Haque et al. (2023) avowed that autonomous students are also thought to be well-organized, self-sufficient, accountable, and inquiring. Dynamic engagement in the learning process, accountability for control over elements like rate of repetition, pace, time, setting, ways to learning, and critical awareness of aims and objectives are all brought about by autonomy (Little, 2022). Using learner-centered learning could encourage students to actively participate in the learning process and provide them the freedom to control their own language learning objectives (Farhady, 2021), thereby raising their level of autonomy. Today's teachers are strengthened to encourage their pupils to self-invest and self-regulate in their learning practices, thereby fostering the development of their autonomy. Not only should students be actively involved in the process of learning their native language, but the assessment process is also a crucial component in this respect (Tosuncuoglu, 2018).

As pointed out by Zaim (2020), academics have claimed that language assessment needs to change in the recent past. This change has led to the development of a brand-new assessment method known as alternative assessment. According to Naraghizadeh et al. (2023), alternative assessment is a continuous process in which both students and instructors assess the student's proficiency in language using a variety of unconventional tactics and methodologies. There are various sorts of alternative assessments (Ashraf & Mahdinezhad, 2015). Self-assessment (SA) is one of the various evaluation kinds that students can use to explore, enhance, and control how they act in relation to the language learning course as a whole and speaking competence specifically (Marzuki, et al., 2020). As Bachman et al. (2010) noted, the definition of SA is the evaluation or assessment of oneself or one's performance, attitudes, or activities. In order to measure learners' ability in the four

fundamental language competencies of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, SA has been used frequently in language testing (Hung, 2019). SA enables students to have some awareness of their accountability with regard to the learning objectives (Ma & Winke, 2019).

In addition to SA, another form of alternative assessment is peer assessment (PA), which is regarded as an educational strategy that necessitates learners to evaluate their classmates' exertions within a learning setting (Power & Tanner, 2023). Throughout PA, learners can take advantage of both offering and getting feedback. With proper continuations, PAs are similar concerning reliability to those of teachers (Panadero, et al., 2023). When employed efficiently learners benefit through amplified feedback, enhanced understanding of performance principles, cultivate their cognizing of their learning development, and eventually foster their performance and accomplishment (Double, et al., 2020). Another form of assessment that is mostly used in assessing EFL learners' is teacher assessment (TA). TA is considered an assessment wherein the teacher inspects and evaluates the whole process of learning (Al-Rashidi, et al., 2022). In this category of assessment, the teacher keeps track of the learners' engagements, enactments, and learning outcomes and offers clarifications so that students can reinforce their unconvincing capabilities (Hung, 2019). Consistent with what has been discussed above and with respect to the existing gap regarding autonomy and different types of assessment, this study sets out to answer the following question:

1. Is there any significant difference among the effect of SA, PA, and TA applied in teaching speaking on EFL learners' autonomy?

2. Review of the Related Literature
2.1. Autonomy

One of the most prominent learner-related factors that potentially has a very grave role in students' accomplishment, is the notion of autonomy (Hashemian & Soureshjani, 2011). Autonomy is considered as the capability to partake, and to embrace the accountability for all the choices with reference to all features of learning. Throughout the last few decades, the notions of learner autonomy and individuality have obtained stimulus, and autonomy, has become a catchword within the setting of language learning and instruction. In the realm of language learning and instruction, aiding students to become more independent in their learning has recently become one of the most crucial topics (Benson, 2011). Independence is thought to be one of the essential educational goals (Benson, 2013). Additionally, as noted by Pishghadam and Naji Meidani (2011), the

degree of autonomy largely depends on the culture and the context of learning and teaching; for this reason, it is important to look into the idea of learners' autonomy in a setting like Iran.

As pointed out by Asharaf and Mahdinezad (2015), autonomy is a concept that is challenging to revive an agreement among academics. Teachers should stimulate the students to develop the capability of learning self-sufficiently (Asharaf & Mahdinezad, 2015). They asserted that this will support the students not merely in their academic life in formal situations, but also in their lifespan where they have to study and decide at any moment. In another explanation, learner autonomy basically denotes the application of self-study resources (Benson, 2007). Additionally, the notion of autonomy refers to the condition wherein pupils study completely or fundamentally on their own without the support of any teacher (Benson, 2007).

As Lap (2005) noted, learner autonomy is primarily influenced by pupil cognitive capacity or competence, psychological factors like attitudes, inclinations, willingness, and self-confidence, metacognitive strategies like setting goals, selecting materials, predicting learning actions, and measuring self-progress, as well as social characteristics like a propensity to work in teams with others. Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari (2014) made the observation that an autonomous learner is someone who is accountable for their actions both in and outside of the classroom. The teacher's involvement in independent education was underlined by a number of different studies (Zhuang, 2010). In autonomous education, teachers play more than only the role of a source of information; they also serve as a student's psychological, social, and practical support system (Zhuang, 2010).

2.2. Self-Assessment (SA)

SA is recognized as a method of formative assessment, as correctly noted by Andrade and Du (2007). In SA, students review and evaluate the quality of their work and education, taking into account specific goals or guiding principles, and identifying their efforts' strong points and weaknesses. Similar to how Spiller (2012) noted that self-evaluation of one's own knowledge progress is crucial to the advancement of language acquisition. He went on to say that learning is only possible after determining what needs to be learned. In fact, if people look into their growth, they might be more motivated to study more over time.

Furthermore, according to Boud (1995), SA, with its emphasis on student accountability and decision-making, is a crucial skill for lifelong learning. SA can assist students in resolving issues for which we already

have a solution, as noted by Boud and Brew (1995), as well as issues that we are now even unable to comprehend. According to Amo and Jereno (2011), SA enhances students' critical consciousness skills, enables them to become self-managing and introspective, identify the next stages of their education, and advance in their learning. Additionally, according to Boud (1992), SA refers to the pupils' consideration of and participation in their own efforts during classroom activities to evaluate their own performance. Likewise, Gardner (2000) asserted, that self-evaluation is a crucial skill for all language learners, but it is especially important for those who aspire to be autonomous.

The main benefit of SA is that it enables pupils to participate more actively in the educational process by motivating them to focus on their successes and inspiring them to take greater responsibility for setting goals and developing opinions about their schooling (Ballantyne et al., 2002). Increased student autonomy in self-evaluation will significantly increase their motivation to study the target language. Self-evaluation encourages learning flexibility. When SA is ingrained in the educational process and is used by students, learning is deemed successful (Fathi et al., 2017). Although SA aids students in their efforts to acquire a specific language, its current lack of use in a variety of settings and contexts is genuinely disappointing (Abbasszadeh, 2012).

2.3. Peer-Assessment (PA)

PA is recognized as another type of assessment that requires students to appraise the efforts of their peers in a learning environment (Power & Tanner, 2023). It is interesting to note that there are other synonyms for PA, including peer evaluation, peer review, peer feedback, and peer grading (Panadero et al., 2023). Similar to this, there are many different types of PA, ranging from simple scoring of classmates' work to processes where students evaluate their peers in class and offer feedback or are evaluated by contemporaries and get feedback (Panadero et al., 2018).

In reality, PA inspires learners for the reason that this type of assessment encompasses the learners in their final outcomes. Besides, PA widens learners' understanding, develops intergroup dealings, and generates greater chances for learners to collaborate (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Likewise, it also endorses students' self-confidence and helps to improve constructive relationships. PA also donates to a higher level of thinking and more recurrent peers of thoughts and explanation (Birjandi & Ahmadi, 2013). Students have continually assumed assessment as the worst fragment of their education (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). It is worth noting that learners have sometimes even regarded assessment as

retaliation by their teachers. In this respect, PA can be regarded as one of the significant methods for enhancing learning and minimizing destructive attitudes toward assessment. Furthermore, PA offers responses related to the capability of the student to make a decision (Falchikov, 2001) .

Similarly, PA is also regarded as an extra way of removing students' dependence on the teacher for response and supervision in the process of language education. As pointed out by Ashraf and Mahdinezhad (2015), learner self-sufficiency and teamwork are improved by PA. This is basically based on the supposition that students can acquire as much from their classmates as they can learn in actual fact from their teacher. PA, in which pupils review their peers' efforts, is a type of instruction that enables students to provide feedback on their counterparts' efforts (Falchikov, 2001). Pupils may discuss their findings or share them with educators. These evaluations help professors and students form relationships more quickly and aid students in developing useful skills in both the educational and career spheres (Spiller, 2012).

2.4. Teacher Assessment (TA)

The other type of evaluation is TA, in which the teacher has complete control over the assessment process and the students have no chance to participate in it (Bachman, 1990). Teachers assess pupils not only to comprehend what they have acquired but also to plan the subsequent steps they will take. This means that the development of learning and instruction places a strong priority on teacher evaluation. In this way, teachers must identify where their pupils stand in terms of their learning at the start of a unit of study and continually monitor their progress based on their pupil's responses.

Students are also instructed on what they must learn and what excellence in effort looks like. To comprehend and identify any gaps or misunderstandings, the teacher will work with the student (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). In actuality, teacher evaluation—whose name speaks for itself—relates to the category of evaluation in which the instructor is in charge of the assessment strategy and the students have no chance to participate in the evaluation (Bachman, 1990). The main goal of teacher evaluation and assessment should be to improve the knowledge, skills, personalities, and classroom activities of qualified instructors. This goal encourages student development while also motivating teachers to keep educating.

Teachers rely on assessment as a technique that can serve as a screening tool and benchmark for the creation of an EFL education curriculum.

According to the established taxonomy of TA (Zarei & Usefi, 2015), teachers are responsible for evaluating the performance of their pupils. According to Ableeva and Lantolf (2011), teacher evaluation can be used to make administrative decisions such as classifying students and selecting them for further tutoring or instruction. Additionally, proponents of teacher evaluation, like Amo and Jereno (2011), assert that teacher evaluation can be used to motivate students to participate more actively in classroom activities. Additionally, they considered that this evaluation strategy is a reliable way to gather the data necessary for evaluating educational involvements or factors in the educational framework. Similarly, it can be used as an indicator of the adequacy of any component of the process of learning, including teaching methods, curricula, teacher preparation, and so on (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2014).

2.5. Relevant Studies

Numerous studies have been conducted on autonomy and various evaluation methods used in various language elements and abilities in various educational contexts. Haque et al. (2023), for instance, revealed a statistically significant correlation between learners' autonomy practices and beliefs in autonomy. Additionally, Ozer and Yukselir (2023) came to the conclusion that a learner's autonomy level was associated with their independence, academic performance, and goal dedication. Similarly, Andina et al. (2020) discovered that students' autonomy was related to their digital competence and writing success. Nemati et al. (2021) revealed that various types of assessment, such as teacher, peer, and SA, had a substantial favorable impact on the development of writing strategy in EFL students. Similarly, Al Rashidi et al. (2022) discovered that peer and SA significantly improved the speaking and writing skills of EFL learners. Additionally, Mazloomi and Khabiri (2018) showed that dynamic SA had a considerable impact on language pupils' writing abilities. Assessment by peers increased learners' writing engagement and decreased their writing anxiety, according to Tunagür (2021). Similarly, Movahedi and Aghajanzadeh Kiasi (2021) came to the conclusion that peer evaluation of the writing abilities of pupils was more beneficial than teacher and self-evaluation. Imani (2021) came to the conclusion that there was no discernible difference in the effects of SA and PA on the speaking abilities of reflective and impulsive EFL students.

3. Method
3.1. Design

The researchers used a convenient non-random selection to choose the participants, but they randomly separated them into three experimental groups with three distinct assessments, making the design a quasi-experimental one. Assessment in three modalities (i.e., SA, PA, and TA) served as the independent variable. The dependent variable was identified as the autonomy of EFL students. Participants' ages (between 22 and 31), gender (female), and language skills (intermediate) were taken into account as the control variables.

3.2. Participants

Sixty intermediate female EFL learners within the age range of 22-31 took part in this study. They studied English at Alavi Language Institute in Tehran. They were selected through convenience samples and based on their performance on PET. The selected participants were randomly divided into three experimental groups SA, PA, and TA.

3.3. Instrumentation
3.3.1. Preliminary English Test

The researchers used a piloted version of the Preliminary English Test (PET), adapted from the book PET Practise Test, to determine the homogeneity of the participants' general proficiency.

3.3.2. Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

To assess the autonomy level of students, The English version of Zhang and Li's Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (2004) was administered. This instrument has two sections. The first section encompasses 11 items and the second section 10, entirely 21 items. The 11 items in the first section are in a five-point Likert-scale format while the 10 items in the second section are in multiple-choice format. EFL students completed this instrument in 25 minutes. Seyed Rezaei et al. (2013) confirmed the high validity and reliability rate of this instrument. Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of this instrument was estimated to be 0. 79 (in pretest) and 0.78 (in posttest).

3.3.3. Instructional Materials

All of the participants received instruction based on 'Speak Now: Communicate with Confidence, Book Three', by Richards and Bohlke (2012) published by Oxford University Press. It has 32 lessons. In this study, the students dealt with the first ten lessons.

3.3.4. Strategies for Teaching Speaking

Based on the lesson plan at Alavi Language Institute different types of strategies should be used for teaching speaking skills. The strategies applied in speaking instruction, recommended by numerous experts, are accomplishments such as drilling, picture describing, role play, games, and storytelling. For this purpose, 10 speaking strategies were covered in this study: *drilling, brainstorming*, *storytelling*, *role-playing*, *discussion*, *information gap*, *describing pictures*, *using minimal responses*, *reporting*, and *comparing: to find the similarities and differences.*

3.3.5. The Speaking SA Rating Sheet

The SA sheet designed by Babaii, et al. (2016) is based on 10 criteria, namely, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communicative effectiveness, topic management, confidence, organization, strategy use, and time management. These 10 criteria are based on a 5-point Likert scale. Accordingly, the participants' scores ranged between 10 to 50.

3.3.6. The Speaking PA Rating Sheet

Yamashiro and Johnson (1997) designed a rating sheet that comprises five parts, namely, Body Language (3 items), Voice Control (4 items), Effectiveness (4 items), Contents of Presentation (3 items), and Visuals (1 item). The items are based on a 5-point Likert scale. Accordingly, the scores ranged between 15 to 75.

3.3.7. The Speaking TA Analytical Rating Scale

The Speaking TA Analytical Rating Scale by Bonk and Ockey (2003) was based on five categories, namely, *grammar, fluency, pronunciation, communicative skills/strategies, and vocabulary/content.* The aforementioned categories are based on 9 levels ranging from 0 to 4. The validity and reliability of this instrument were confirmed by Bonk and Ockey (2003).

3.4. Procedure

To accomplish this purpose the following procedure was followed:

3.4.1. Pre-Treatment Stage

Among 90 EFL learners, 60 pupils were selected based on PET performance and were randomly divided into three groups SA, PA, and TA. Afterwards, the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) was applied to assess the participants' autonomy. All the groups attended their classes twice a week for 12 sessions throughout 6 weeks. Each session was divided into two 90 minutes with 15 minutes break in

between. During the first 90 minutes, the researchers taught the course book to all groups in the same way. After a 15-minute break, the researchers divided the remaining 90 minutes into two parts. The first part, which lasted 50 minutes, was devoted to speaking instruction to all groups. For speaking instruction, various strategies of teaching speaking were introduced to develop and cultivate the participants' speaking capability. In total, 10 speaking strategies were taught to the participants. In each session, the investigators defined and designated one strategy in detail. After instruction and practicing the strategy, the same topic was allocated to the groups. They were requested to talk and communicate their own thoughts concerning each topic and recorded their videos in their homes. Another part, which lasted 40 minutes, was dedicated to the evaluation of the videos. The subsequent sections elucidate the step-by-step process being executed in each group.

3.4.2. Treatment Stage
3.4.2.1. Experimental Group I: Self-Assessment Group (SAG)
The SA 'Checklist Method' (Başak, 2019) was selected. Based on the requirements of the study, the speaking SA sheet by Babaii, et al. (2016) was utilized. Owing to the students' unaccustomedness with speaking SA, the first researcher gave support to each step taken by the pupils until they became gradually competent in SA. To this end, to provide proper modeling and enrich the pupils' understanding, in the first five sessions the first researcher applying the think-aloud technique enlightened how she self-assessed herself. In the meantime, the students remained typically silent although they were given the opportunity to offer comments and ask questions whenever they wanted. Gradually, the students were requested to adopt a more active part and collaborate with their investigators. As a final point, the researchers' support became less to make the learners more self-sufficient and autonomous. At this moment in time, the pupils were requested to listen to their own videos twice, self-assess their own speaking capability based on the 10 criteria encompassed in the checklist, and give themselves a score.

3.4.2.2. Experimental Group II: Peer Assessment Group (PAG)
In Experimental Group II the assessment was conducted through PA utilizing the model proposed by White (2009), which consisted of seven steps as follows:
Step 1. Instructing for PA:
Step 2. Pupils ought to record their own videos:

Step 3. For each presenter, a PA rating sheet was administered to all pupils who were present in class. To evaluate properly, it was very vital to clarify the criteria of the rating sheet to pupils.

Step 4. The rating sheets were afterward gathered and given to the educator.

Step 5. The educator recorded the scores and finalized an average score.

Step 6. Finally, the rating sheets were returned to each learner.

This can aid the students in nurturing their speaking proficiency based on the comments of their friends.

3.4.2.3. Experimental Group III: Teacher Assessment Group (TAG)

In this group, the investigators offered feedback and evaluated the pupils' recorded videos of speaking employing The Assessment Loop Model by Leskes and Wright (2005), which comprised four steps as follows:

Step 1. Set goals, identify issues, and ask questions:

The educator, in this step, ought to identify the objectives of the course of education and the conclusions the educator needs to make. The instructor ought to write the objectives and difficulties as questions that must be responded to in steps 2 through 4. Such as:

- What is essential for pupils?
- What am I endeavoring to accomplish?
- What difficulties am I endeavoring to resolve?
- What am I anticipating would occur as a result of my involvement?
- Did pupils accomplish the anticipated learning outcomes?

Step 2. Gather Evidence:

Select a method/ strategy/approach for instruction and gather the data.

In this study, ten speaking strategies were employed to enhance the speaking abilities of pupils.

Step 3. Interpret Findings:

For interpreting the collected data, The Speaking TA Analytical Rating Scale (Bonk & Ockey, 2003) was employed. Based on the pupils' performance, the instructor gave a score to each level.

Step 4. Design and Act:

In this step, the educator made a decision about objectives based on the inferences in step 3 and took proper action. As stated before, the pupils were requested to talk and communicate their own thoughts concerning each topic and recorded their videos in their homes. The instructor assessed the

videos and the checklist was completed for each pupil individually. The instructor recorded the scores.

3.4.3. Post-Treatment Stage

At the end of the treatment, the three groups received the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) as a posttest.

3.5. *Statistical Analyses*

To test the research hypothesis, an ANCOVA was run on the three groups' scores on autonomy.

4. Results

The three experimental groups were given the autonomy pretest by the researchers prior to any treatment (see Table 1).

Table 1**.** *Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Three Groups on the Autonomy Pretest*

Autonomy Pretest	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
PA	20	57.00	80.00	67.7000	5.61108	-.125	.512
TA	20	53.00	81.00	68.5000	7.91734	-.243	.512
SA	20	61.00	78.00	69.2000	4.56070	.060	.512
Total	20						

As represented in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation for PAG enjoyed 67.70 and 5.61, for TAG M = 68.50 and SD = 7.91, and for SAG M = 69.20 and SD = 4.56. The researchers gave the autonomy posttest to the three experimental groups at the end of the treatment (see Table 2).

Table 2**.** *Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the Three Groups on the Autonomy Posttest*

Autonomy Posttest	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
PA	20	63.00	89.00	74.8500	7.52732	.284	.512
TA	20	69.00	91.00	80.9500	6.77049	.000	.512
SA	20	78.00	98.00	87.6500	5.40248	.512	.512
Total	20						

As exemplified in Table 2, the mean and standard deviation for PAG enjoyed 74.85 and 7.52, for TAG M = 80.95 and SD = 6.77, and for SAG M = 87.65 and SD = 5.40.

To answer the question, a set of ANCOVA was run. All sets of scores enjoyed normalcy (see Tables 1 to 2). To test the homogeneity of variance, a *Levene's* test was run, the results of which revealed the variances were not significantly different ($F_{(2, 57)} = 0.387$, $p = 0.681 > 0.05$).

Table 3. *Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]*

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.387	2	57	.681

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + Pretest + Group

Another important assumption is that of homogeneity of regression slopes. Table 4 displays that the interaction (i.e. Group* Pretest) is 0.491 which is larger than 0.05, consequently, representing that this assumption has not been violated.

Table 4. *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2882.072	5	576.414	24.712	.000
Intercept	335.605	1	335.605	14.388	.000
Group	67.858	2	33.929	1.455	.242
Pretest	1005.958	1	1005.958	43.127	.000
Group * Pretest	33.616	2	16.808	.721	.491
Error	1259.578	54	23.326		
Total	399261.000	60			
Corrected Total	4141.650	59			

a. R Squared = .696 (Adjusted R Squared = .668)

The results of ANCOVA revealed that the pretest scores came out not to be significant ($F = 52.34$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) consequently signifying that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the three groups concerning their autonomy level.

Table 5. *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2848.456	3	949.485	41.116	.000
Intercept	422.195	1	422.195	18.283	.000
Group	1352.823	2	676.412	29.291	.000
Pretest	1208.856	1	1208.856	52.348	.000
Error	1293.194	56	23.093		
Total	399261.000	60			
Corrected Total	4141.650	59			

a. R Squared = .688 (Adjusted R Squared = .671)

Furthermore, Table 6 shows the estimated adjusted/marginal means of the groups.

Table 6. *Estimated Adjusted/Marginal Means of the Groups*

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PA	75.420[a]	1.077	73.262	77.579
TA	80.925[a]	1.075	78.773	83.078
SA	87.104[a]	1.077	84.947	89.262

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values:
Autonomy-pretest = 68.4667.

Besides, there was a significant association between the pretest (the covariate) and the posttest (the dependent variable) while controlling for the independent variables (F = 29.291, p = 0.000 < 0.05). Based on the results, it was found that there were significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups on the autonomy posttest after removing the conceivable influences of their entry autonomy level. To identify the direction of this difference, pairwise comparisons were used.

Table 7. *Pairwise Comparisons*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PA	TA	-5.505	1.522	.001	-8.554	-2.456
	SA	-11.684	1.527	.000	-14.744	-8.624
TA	PA	5.505	1.522	.001	2.456	8.554
	SA	-6.179	1.521	.000	-9.227	-3.132
SA	PA	11.684	1.527	.000	8.624	14.744
	TA	6.179	1.521	.000	3.132	9.227

As can be seen from Table 7, the SAG and TAG performed significantly differently from the PAG. Moreover, the SAG and TAG did perform significantly differently from each other (p = 0.000 < 0.05); that is participants in the SAG (M= 87.65, SD= 5.40,) outperformed the participants in TAG (M= 80.95, SD= 6.77) pertaining to their autonomy level. That is to say, SA in speaking had the most significant influence on the autonomy level of EFL pupils. Moreover, TA in speaking had a more significant influence on the autonomy level of EFL pupils than PA in speaking.

5. Discussion

Rooted in the above-mentioned principles and bearing in mind the significant role of learner autonomy along with assessment in speaking, this quasi-experimental investigation (Best & Kahn, 2006) sought to compare the effects of SA, PA, and TA in speaking on EFL pupil autonomy. An ANCOVA was applied to answer the question of the study. The findings specified that SA in speaking had a more significant positive effect (p = 0.000 < 0.05) on EFL pupils' autonomy level than the other two types of assessment (i.e., PA and TA). The pupil's altered attitudes toward their roles as devoted individuals in the process of acquiring a language may be the most important underlying cause for the success of SA in speaking on the autonomy of learners (Thanh, 2019). SA is seen as an essential skill for independent and independent language acquisition. Additionally, when students are given the right direction to handle and take charge of their learning process, autonomy can progressively grow in them (Shakeri & Nosratinia, 2013).

Similarly, Alibakhshi and Sarani (2014) argued that SA increases learners' enthusiasm and autonomy since they perceive themselves as responsible for their own language learning, which over time leads to the development of lifelong self-sufficient students. Additionally, SA gives the learner immediate feedback to determine their own level of language competency and to take into account different self-directed learning methodologies (Gholami, 2016). In general, SA encourages learners to actively participate in their own lives, strengthens their sense of independence, and inspires them more. The findings of the current study in this regard are consistent with those of Thanh (2019), who claimed that SA significantly increased the autonomy of EFL pupils. The results of the current study are in agreement with those of Gholami (2016), who found that using SA techniques increased the autonomy of EFL pupils.

The gained results also showed that TA of speaking had a more significant influence (p = 0.001 0.05) than PA of speaking on the

autonomy level of EFL pupils. It's possible that students won't want to judge their peers. Another reasonable explanation for this outcome of the current study could be that learners feel unprepared to begin the assessment. Additionally, students in the PAG tended to give each other the same mark for their speaking, which may have contributed to their lower level of autonomy compared to participants in the TAG. Additionally, it is thought that learners are not very confident in their abilities to judge others' linguistic proficiency. The results are not in agreement with those of Ashraf and Mahdinezhad (2015). The ability of students to evaluate their classmates depends on the setting and internal aspects of participants, such as their temperament, which is a reasonable explanation for this gap. As a result, both the educational setting and internal learner variables influence how well students are able to evaluate their classmates (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017).

6. Conclusion

This study concluded that, in order to increase the autonomy of EFL learners, SA and TA in speaking are both useful assessment styles that should be taken into account by instructors and investigators. Assessment and autonomy in language acquisition are closely related, so instructors should play a key role by handing over the responsibility of assessment to the pupils (Gholami, 2016). Therefore, it is advised that EFL teachers assist EFL students in becoming social and academic directors of their own learning, self-driven and devoted to learning, self-reflective with regard to their learning; and careful in applying what they actually learn in real target speech-exploiting situations. Moreover, language educators are advised to adopt language learners' viewpoints and perceptions, welcome their emotions, ideas, and accomplishments, and promote their motivational development and competency for being autonomous and independent in order to encourage learners to become autonomous pupils (Reeve, 2009).

Based on the findings, it is advised that EFL teachers employ a variety of assessment methods appropriate for their pupil's language proficiency without favoring one over the other. Additionally, EFL pupils should be taught about the value of autonomy in language acquisition as well as the impact that assessment as a whole and SA in particular has on their autonomy (Almusharraf, 2018). Therefore, it is important to encourage them to evaluate their own speaking and general language learning abilities. While allowing pupils to evaluate their own language learning achievements would help them become independent, self-reflective, and self-sufficient learners, teachers should occasionally stand down from the

so-called authoritative and dominating posture chair (Almusharraf, 2018). Finally, teacher preparation programs should make an effort to familiarise potential instructors with the value of assessment in learning and how to support pupils who are learning a second language in becoming independent learners. The participants in this study were EFL students between the ages of 22 and 31. Other ages could be included in the same study. Equal numbers of men and women can be used in future research to ensure that gender doesn't operate as an influencing factor.

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