



**THE ROLE OF SELF-ASSESSMENT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A
REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

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***Abstract** Self-assessment has been increasingly recognized as a valuable tool in language learning and assessment. This paper explores key studies that have investigated the effectiveness, reliability, and student perceptions of self-assessment in foreign language education. The analysis highlights the correlation between self-assessment and standardized proficiency tests, the impact of specific self-assessment criteria, and the role of affective factors. The findings suggest that self-assessment can be a reliable supplementary evaluation method when properly implemented with clear criteria and structured practice.*

***Key words:** self-assessment, language learning, student perceptions, learner autonomy, motivation, affective factors, evaluation criteria;*

Introduction Self-assessment in language learning has gained significant attention as an alternative or complementary assessment approach. LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985) explored self-assessment as an implementation tool and found a strong correlation between students' self-assessed proficiency and standardized test results. The ability to evaluate one's own language skills has been linked to increased learner autonomy, motivation, and self-regulation. However, the accuracy and validity of self-assessment depend on multiple factors, including the nature of the criteria, learner experience, and psychological influences.

Self-Assessment as a Valid Measure of Language Proficiency Research has demonstrated a high correlation between self-assessment and standardized testing when focused on specific language skills. Blanche and Merino (1989) found that describing situations in which students could determine their ability to perform certain tasks ("can do" statements) was an effective approach to self-assessment. Higher correlations were observed between self-assessed speaking and writing skills compared to general self-assessment, which could lead to misinterpretations of ability levels. Ross (1998) reinforced these findings in a meta-analysis, indicating that functional self-assessment formats improved student engagement and accuracy.

Influence of Criteria and Experience on Self-Assessment Accuracy The specificity and clarity of self-assessment criteria influence its effectiveness. Ross (1998) suggested that when students assess functional skills rather than abstract



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proficiency levels, they participate more actively and achieve greater accuracy in their evaluations. Similarly, Bachman and Palmer (1989) observed that second language learners tend to be more aware of their strengths than their weaknesses, often overestimating their abilities in more challenging areas.

Smith (1997) examined self-assessment among EFL learners in Israel and found that students placed greater trust in their own evaluations than in teacher-assigned grades. Even when presented with summative exam results, students claimed superior insight into their own proficiency. However, they also acknowledged the risk of overestimating their abilities in high-stakes situations. Andrade and Du (2007) further supported these findings, demonstrating that students develop a more positive attitude toward self-assessment with continued practice, provided that clear criteria are used to enhance grading consistency and performance improvement.

Cognitive and Affective Factors Affecting Self-Assessment Studies have explored the psychological influences on self-assessment accuracy. Blanche and Merino (1989) found that proficient learners tend to underestimate their abilities, while weaker learners frequently overestimate their performance. Similar patterns were reported by Heilenman (1990), Janssen-van Dieten (1989), and Oscarson (1984). Taras (2001) discovered that college students typically rated their performance lower than their instructors did, confirming a tendency for self-doubt among high-achieving learners. Heilenman (1990) attributed this to greater awareness of skill limitations among more experienced students.

Oscarson (2006) analyzed Swedish national assessment data and reported a moderate correlation ($r = 0.67$) between self-assessment and final grades. The highest accuracy in self-evaluation was observed among students who passed their language proficiency exams, with 83% correctly predicting their final grades.

Motivational and Pedagogical Implications Research suggests that self-assessment can enhance learner motivation and engagement. Blanche and Merino (1989) and von Elek (1981, 1985) reported increased motivation among students using self-assessment tools. MacIntyre, Noels, and Clément (1997) found that self-confidence significantly influenced self-assessment accuracy, with low-confidence learners not only performing poorly but also underestimating their abilities. Conversely, some students exhibited a tendency to overrate their skills, especially in unfamiliar contexts.

Oscarson (1998) emphasized the role of self-assessment in fostering self-regulated learning and learner autonomy. Earlier studies by Eriksson (1993) and



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Huttunen (1986) suggested that most research in this domain focused on developing self-assessment materials and methodologies rather than on its direct pedagogical implications. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has since incorporated "can do" statements into language proficiency scales, reinforcing the role of self-assessment as an integral part of language learning and evaluation (Oscarson, 1999).

Conclusion Self-assessment has been shown to be a valuable, though complex, tool in language education. Its reliability depends on clear criteria, structured practice, and student experience. While proficient learners may underestimate their abilities, weaker students often overrate their performance, highlighting the need for calibration through guided practice. The integration of self-assessment into language curricula can enhance learner motivation, self-regulation, and awareness of personal learning progress. Future research should focus on refining self-assessment methodologies to improve accuracy and pedagogical effectiveness.

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