TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AFFECTING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' GENERAL AND ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY

Abbas Ali Zarei
Associate professor, English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran
E-mail: a.zarei@hum.ikiu.ac.ir

Zahra Usefli
MA, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran
E-mail: usefli.zahra@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to compare the effects of three types of assessment (self, peer, and teacher) on EFL learners' general and academic self-efficacy. The participants included a sample of 94 Iranian EFL learners studying English at IT English institute in Qazvin, Iran. A version of the Preliminary English Test (PET) along with the Persian translation of a 12-item general self-efficacy and an 8-item academic self-efficacy questionnaire were used to collect data. The participants were divided into three groups, and each group of participants was exposed to one of the treatment conditions. They were given the questionnaires both before and after the treatment. Two separate ANCOVA procedures were used to analyze data. No significant differences were found among the effects of the three types of assessment on general self-efficacy. However, both self-assessment and peer-assessment were found to be more effective on academic self-efficacy than teacher-assessment. Meanwhile, the difference between self and peer -assessment in academic self-efficacy was not statistically significant. Other than theoretical implications, the findings of this study may also have pedagogical implications for teachers, learners as well as syllabus designers.
Keywords: *academic self-efficacy; general self-efficacy; peer-assessment; self-assessment; teacher-assessment.*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, many researchers have attempted to figure out the potential effect of self-efficacy on learners' educational achievement. Type of assessment is also among the influential factors affecting learners' course performance. Self-assessment requires learners to reflect on their own activity and evaluate it against the assigned criteria (Adachi, Hong-Weng Tai, & Dawson, 2017). On the other hand, peer-assessment engages learners in the assessment of the activities of their classmates using established criteria (Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Teacher-assessment refers to the traditional system in which teachers are responsible for students' performance assessment (Brown & Hudson, 1998). It is still the dominant type of assessment in Iranian educational system.

Although many researchers have studied the effects of several types of self-efficacy including goal-orientation, self-regulation and achievement motivation on the course performance of learners (Abbasian, Khezrinejad, & Teimourtash, 2017; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001), as well as the impact of self (Butler & Lee, 2010; Chen, 2008), peer (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Topping, 2017), and teacher-assessment (Chacon, 2005; Hoy & Davis, 2006) on learners'

performance, few studies have been conducted on the differences among types of self-efficacy as psychological factors and their relationships with peer, teacher and self-assessment (Alfallay, 2004; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to compare the effects of peer, teacher, and self-assessment on EFL Learners' general and academic self-efficacy. It aims to find answers for the following research questions: 1) Which type of assessment (self, peer, and teacher) is more effective on Iranian EFL learners' general self- efficacy? and 2) Which type of assessment (self, peer, and teacher) is more effective on Iranian EFL learners' academic self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is generally defined as students' confidence towards their own capabilities by which they try to improve their level of proficiency (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Maraghi, Mortazavi-Tabatabaei, Ahmady, and Hosseini (2018) argue that learners with high levels of self-efficacy in a specific activity are expected to show higher quality performance than those with low and insufficient self-efficacy. It is also assumed that learners with low self-efficacy levels may easily give up their attempt when they face obstacles.

Doménech-Betoret, Abellán-Roselló, and Gómez-Artiga (2017) study the role of learners' self-efficacy beliefs in their academic outcomes. They emphasize the predictive power of self-efficacy in predicting students' success and maybe their persistence in their future career and academic achievement. They claim that their study has influential implications, especially for counseling in terms of learners' educational or vocational needs. They present a detailed review of related literature related to self-efficacy beliefs and the effects such beliefs can have on learners' academic achievement. They also employ a quantitative meta-analysis and find evidence in support of the direct relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and students' insistence on improving their academic achievement.

Zimmerman (2000) emphasizes self-efficacy as the most effective component in forecasting students' motivation and performance. He believes that early studies in this regard pay little attention to environmental and contextual factors. To this end, he studies self-efficacy with specific focus on how students regulate learning and control their own performance. He maintains that self-efficacy has many aspects that differ with regard to their area of functioning. He also concludes that self-efficacy has salutary effects on predicting learners' motivation and improving their learning.

Pajares (2003) investigates the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on learners' achievement in writing. In the study, he emphasizes that during the past decades, studies have highlighted the potential effect of self-efficacy on learners' academic writing, and that these findings corroborate Maraghi, *et al.* (2018) claim about the unique contribution that self-efficacy makes to human performance. He also asserts that this relationship has a unique implication for teachers in helping students to develop their ability and self-beliefs. He claims that teachers' concentration on students' self-efficacy beliefs and encouraging them to self-reflect on their own performance are essential aspects of improving their writing performance.

Pajares (2006) points out that self-efficacy assists learners to keep their endeavor to achieve success rather than teach them how to be a successful person. When learners are required to make a choice related to their competence in their educational performance, they will undoubtedly choose the suitable one (Pajares, 2006). According to Britner and Pajares (2006), self-efficacy has an undeniable role in students' course choice and their performance in learning. Elsewhere, Schunk, and Pajares (2002) claim that the prediction of students' achievement is possible through self-efficacy beliefs.

Generally, self-efficacy has to do with one's potential to judge and execute specified action (Pajares, 2006). Specifically speaking, however, self-efficacy may be of two types;

namely, general and academic. General self-efficacy refers to a broad and somehow fixed feeling of individual capability across different environments (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

Academicelf-efficacy is defined as an individual's confidence about performing determined tasks or controlling actions in academic settings (Lampert, 2007). Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) define academic self-efficacy as one's perceptions of performance in academic tasks. In a study, Köseoğlu (2015) attempts to clarify the relationships between self-efficacy and academic achievement. It is concluded that self-efficacy level is directly related to academic outcomes.

Lampert (2007) believes that in an academic context, individuals' self-efficacy potential to manage their educational process affects their academic performance and achievement. Believing that self-efficacy affects learning achievement, several researchers ivestigate their relationship and concluded that academic self-efficacy has a significant effect on academic achievement (Bong, 2001; Pajares, 2006). Elahi Motlagh, Amrai, and Yazdani (2011) report the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement in high school context. Meanwhile, Pajares (2006) confirms that self-efficacy correlated positively with academic performance.

According to Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, Agung, and Vigayanti (2018), self-assessment refers to students' engagement in classroom activities, and the evaluation of their own achievement. Self-assessment is usually aimed in improving students' active participation in the classroom and causing them to reflect on their own performance towards further learning.

Assessment provides learners' with information about their strengths and weaknesses, especially by actively engaging them in their own or peer assessment. They are guided in assigned learning goals, and by getting feedback, they benefit from self-evaluating and self-assessing (Davies, 2002; Shepard, 2000).

Sluijsmans, Dochy, and Moerkerke (1999) study how using self and peer assessment can help to generate a positive learning environment. They conclude that the most important aspect of self and peer assessment is to set certain criteria that can be used to evaluate learners' improvement and change the norm-referenced testing to criterion-referenced testing in student-centered environments, or to shift from product assessment to process assessment.

Keig (2000) investigates faculty members' attitudes at Liberal Art Colleges towards colleague assessment. The study aims in discovering which methods of peer-assessment (evaluation of course materials, videotaping of classes, classroom observation and assessment of their evaluation) the faculty will choose to improve teaching. The results suggest that: 1) Over 50 % of the faculty is willing to take part in these types of assessment. 2) There is a statistically negative relationship between willingness of faculty members towards using each approach of assessment and each detractor; and 3) the relationship between faculty members' willingness to use each method of assessment and each enhancer depends on some effective conditions such as participants' membership in this process, or faculty's consultation in planning the forms of the review.

McLaughlin and Simpson (2004) study students' feeling about the application of peer-assessment at Melbourne University to find out whether students prefer to be assessed by peers or the teacher. The results show a large number of students preferred peer-assessment. Similarly and Karaca (2009) investigate the attitudes of teacher trainees toward peer-assessment and how variables like experience in peer-assessment, gender, and trust in peer-assessment can influence the participants' opinion. It is found that the teacher trainees believed peer-assessment can persuade learners to actively engage themselves in assessment, and that this is significantly related to their gender.

Ross (2005) examines the effect of assessment method on the development of

foreign language proficiency with a group of 2215 participants in an eight-year longitudinal study. Based on the results, formative assessment is more effective on language learning, especially on the development of listening comprehension ability. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) investigates how self-regulated learning and formative assessment can assist learners to manage their own performance as self-regulated learners.

Sluijsmans and Prins (2006) examine the possibility of integrating peer-assessment into teacher education. The results indicate a positive correlation between peer-assessment tasks and learners' general improvement. In another study, Xiao and Lucking (2008) compare the effectiveness of peer-assessment on learners' performance and satisfaction. The participants are 232 sophomore and junior students. The results suggest that the participants of the peer-evaluation group outperformed those in the comparison group in writing and have a higher level of satisfaction.

Pare and Joordens (2008) study the agreement between peer-assessment and expert marking in Peer Scholar system (as a kind of online peer-assessment tool). The participants are 1143 university students who are required to complete two writing assignments through using computers by connecting to the website hosting PeerScholar. The results show significant correlations among expert markers and a high level of agreement between peer assessors and expert markers.

White (2009) claims that when learners assess their peers' performance, they are concerned about their own capabilities with regard to subject matter, their objectivity, and their relationship with peers. Moreover, White's (2009) study shows the participants' positive attitude and a feeling of satisfaction in peer-assessment.

In a similar study, Karaca (2009) investigates the opinion of teacher trainees about peer-assessment and the role of variables like previous experience and gender in the participants' opinion. The results

indicate that the teacher trainees thought that peer-assessment is a useful method for persuading learners to participate in assessment and evaluate their peers' work. It is also observed that this is strongly moderated by their gender.

Butler and Lee (2010) search to find out how self-assessment affects the self-confidence of EFL learners from two different schools, one from upper middle class and the other from lower socio-economic level with two different experienced teachers. They use two types of self-assessment including general self-assessment for summative purposes, and unit-based self-assessment. The results confirm the positive effect of self-assessment on learners' English learning and their self-confidence improvement.

Chen (2010) investigates the effectiveness of a system of mobile peer and self-assessment. The results show positive relationships between the participants' attitude and their mobile assessment participation system and its implementation, although there is no consistency between teacher-evaluation and learner-evaluation.

Tillema, Leenknecht, and Segers (2011) investigate how peer-assessment affects the quality of assessment. The results indicate that there is a direct relationship between learners' involvement in peer-assessment and improvement in their quality of assessment.

Kao (2012) investigates the possible ways of improving the quality of students' peer review. The study follows several steps including grouping, task completion, training in peer-assessment, group presentation, self/peer-assessment in the normal and peer-assessment with positive interdependence (PAPI) conditions, and scores. The results show that peer-assessment with a positive independence condition lead to a decrease in the students' reliance on their own preferences or opinion.

Esfandiari and Myford (2013) study if there are any differences among teacher, peer and self-assessors in scoring EFL essays. They conclude that among the three assessor

types, self-assessors are the least severe while teachers are the most severe assessors.

Zarei and Sayar Mahdavi (2014) study the possible effect of peer and teacher assessment on Iranian EFL learners' lexical and grammatical writing accuracy. Based on the results, the experimental group, which use peer-assessment, significantly outperformed the comparison group, which use teacher-assessment, in both lexical and grammatical writing accuracy.

The above review suggests that various aspects of self-efficacy have already been investigated, and so have different kinds of assessment. However, there seems to be a paucity of research on how different types of assessment may influence students' feelings of general and academic self-efficacy. The present study is conducted to partially fill this gap.

METHOD
The participants of the present study included a sample of 94 Iranian EFL learners (both male and female) roughly at intermediate level of proficiency. They were between the age range of 19 to 28, and they were learning English at IT English institute in Qazvin, Iran. They had about four years of learning experience at the mentioned institute. Therefore, they were naturally expected to have at least partial knowledge of types of assessment and types of strategies that they used. Still, to ensure full understanding, the key elements were elaborated in their native language.

Three instruments were used to collect data including the following: a Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to determine the participants' level of proficiency and to homogenize them before starting the treatment. PET is a standard test to determine intermediate students' level of proficiency. The version of the PET used in this study included 55 items in multiple-choice format, 30 grammatical items, and 25 vocabulary items. The test also included reading comprehension items in four formats including matching, comprehension questions, true-false, and gap fills.

The participants' general self-efficacy was checked using Bosscher and Smit's (1998) questionnaire. It had 17 items scored on a Likert type scale. The original index of the reliability of the test was reported to be α = 0.69. Bosscher and Smit excluded five items due to their vague wording. The questionnaire was adopted from Zarei and Taheri (2013). To ensure learners' understanding, the questionnaire was translated by the researcher. It contained a total number of 12 statements regarding the participants' general self-efficacy. It was scored on a 5-point Likert type scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. To re-estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, the index of Cronbach's Alpha was checked, and it was 0.66.

The academic self-efficacy scale developed by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) was used to gauge the participants' academic self-efficacy. The questionnaire was adopted from Zarei and Taheri (2013). To ensure learners' understanding, the questionnaire was translated by the researcher. It consisted of 8 items. The response format was a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To estimate the reliability of the instrument in the context of the present study, Cronbach's Alpha was checked; it was 0.70 ($\alpha = 0.70$).

To collect the required data, the following steps were followed: In the first stage, the participants who were studying English in an institute in Qazvin were selected. To prevent the participants' confusion and to remove any possible source of anxiety, all of the participants were briefed about the aims of the study.

Next, the PET test was administered at the beginning of the study to ensure the participants' homogeneity, in terms of their level of language proficiency. Sixty minutes were allocated to this test. The results confirmed the participants were more or less at the same level of proficiency.

Then the general self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy questionnaires were administered, and the participants were

asked to respond to the above questionnaires by choosing from among 5 alternatives ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The time that was allotted to the questionnaires was about 30 minutes.

Then, the 16-session treatment began. The participants were placed in three groups, with each group receiving one of the different types of treatment (teacher, peer, and self-assessment).

After the experimental period, the same questionnaires were given again to measure the participants' gain after the implementation of the assessment techniques. The obtained data were then summarized and submitted to statistical analysis.

To analyze the collected data and to answer the research questions about the effects of teacher, peer, and self-assessment on learners' general and academic self-efficacy, two separate Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) procedures were utilized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the first question was to see if there were any differences in the effectiveness of self, peer, and teacher-assessment on EFL learners' general self-efficacy. To do so, a one-way ANCOVA was used. Table 1 contained the descriptive statistics.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics on general self efficacy*

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Self	34.1333	3.10432	30
Peer	35.3529	4.16975	34
Teacher	35.2333	3.82986	30
Total	34.9255	3.74809	94

Table 1 clearly showed that the peer-assessment group had the highest mean score, followed by the teacher-assessment group. The first group, receiving self-assessment, had the lowest mean. To see whether or not the differences between the groups were statistically significant, ANCOVA was used, the results of which were presented in Table 2. Based on Table 2,

no statistically significant differences could be seen among the peer, self, and teacher assessment groups on the post-test ($F_{(1,93)} = 0.526$, $p > 0.05$). At the same time, the table showed significant initial differences among them on the pre-test. This meant that no sound conclusion could be made about the effect of assessment type of the learners' general self-efficacy.

Table 2. *Test statistics for the ANCOVA on general self-efficacy*

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	431.56[a]	3	143.78	14.78	.000	.330	1.00
Intercept	314.96	1	314.96	32.39	.000	.265	1.00
Generalselfefficacypre	403.47	1	403.47	41.49	.000	.316	1.00
Group	10.23	2	5.11	.526	.593	.012	.13
Error	875.12	90	9.72				
Total	115967.00	94					
Corrected Total	1306.47	93					
a. R Squared = .330 (Adjusted R Squared = .308)							
b. Computed using alpha = .05							

The second question was intended to see the differences in the effectiveness of peer, self and teacher-assessment on

academic self-efficacy. To this end, another ANCOVA was run. Table 3 showed the descriptive statistics.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics on academic self-efficacy*

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
self	34.4667	3.50107	30
peer	34.4412	4.62661	34
teacher	31.0333	4.76686	30
Total	33.3617	4.59043	94

Based on Table 3, the self-assessment group had got the highest mean, closely followed by the peer-assessment group, and the teacher-assessment group had got the lowest mean. To see whether the observed differences were significant or not, the ANCOVA was run, the results of which were summarized in Table 4. Table 4 showed that self, peer, and teacher-assessment were differentially effective on EFL learners' academic self-efficacy. However, it could be observed from Table 4 that the differences were significant in the pre-test, too.

Therefore, care must be exercised in interpreting the obtained result ($F_{(1,93)} = 3.27$, $p < 0.05$). This implied that the differences that were observed among the groups might not be necessarily attributable to the effect of the treatment. That was why the effect size was also checked. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.068$) indicated that about 7% of the observed differences were due to the independent variable (assessment type). This meant that the other 93% of the variance was still unaccounted for.

Table 4. *Test statistics for the ANCOVA on academic self efficacy*

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	733.45[a]	3	244.48	17.94	.000	.37	1.00
Intercept	769.30	1	769.30	56.46	.000	.38	1.00
academicselfefficacypre	494.56	1	494.56	36.29	.000	.28	1.00
group	89.33	2	44.66	3.27	.042	.06	.60
Error	1226.25	90	13.62				
Total	106582.00	94					
Corrected Total	1959.70	93					

a. R Squared = .374 (Adjusted R Squared = .353)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

To locate the differences, the pair wise comparisons were done. The results of the pair wise comparisons were presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Pair wise comparisons on academic self efficacy*

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
self	peer	-.131	.925	.887	-1.969	1.706
self	teacher	2.085*	.979	.036	.140	4.030
peer	teacher	2.217*	.946	.021	.338	4.095

Based on estimated marginal means
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Based on Table 5, the difference between the first and the second groups was not statistically significant. However, the members of both groups had outperformed

those in group 3. This meant that although there was no meaningful difference between self and peer-assessment on EFL learners' academic self-efficacy, both types of assessment were significantly more effective than teacher-assessment.

One of the findings of the present study was that no significant differences were found in the effects of different kinds of assessment on learners' general self-efficacy. This finding did not corroborate those obtained by Xiao and Lucking (2008), who concluded that learners' satisfaction, which was one of the components of general self-efficacy, was related to peer-assessment. This finding of the study also contradicted those of Kao (2012), who reported a positive correlation between the type of assessment, especially peer-assessment and students' general self-efficacy.

The other finding of this study was the significant effect of assessment type on academic self-efficacy. This finding supported those of Ross (2005), who reported that assessment affects learners' language learning. Since, learning language was one of the results of students' academic performance, so this study was in accord with that of Ross. This result was also compatible with those of Zarei and Sayar Mahdavi (2014), who concluded that peer-assessment was effective on learners' lexical and grammatical accuracy in writing, which was one of the components of their academic performance. In addition, this finding lent support to that of Sluijsmans and Prins (2006), who reported a positive relationship between learners' peer-assessment tasks and their learning performance, because a strong positive relationship had already reported between self-efficacy and learning performance (Caprara, *et al.*, 2011; Pajares, 2003; Zimmerman, 2000).

Several factors could possibly account for these findings. One of the reasons might be the Iranian socio-cultural educational context in which students found it easier to avoid expressing their opinion and just follow teachers' instructions. Moreover, mostly teachers were change-resistant, and were used to the security of comfortable routines, which might decrease learners' motivation.

Another reason might be attributed to the learners' knowledge about the differences among the types of assessment. When learners had information about the merits of self-assessment, they might be more willing to use it just to eradicate teacher assessment, which caused stress and anxiety resulting in a decrease in their active participation in class activities. Learners in teacher-centered classes tried to save themselves from losing face.

Another potential reason might be the learners' proficiency level, which was an important factor in assessment. The participants should be at a good proficiency level to be able to assess each other. For example, participants in Huang's (2011) study were all college students, but in this study, the participants were a combination of high school and collage learners. This might had affected their performance.

Another reason could possibly be the students' proficiency level and age. In Kao's (2012) study, all of the participants were graduate students, but in this study, the participants were a combination of high school and university students. Therefore, when learners were young and at different levels of proficiency, their tendency toward expressing their opinion might be moderated. Another factor could had been the age of the participants. The participants of this study were between the age range of 19 to 28. So, one reason why we came up with different results was probably because of the differences between the age level of the participants in this study and others.

Still another reason might be attributable to students' personality traits, especially being extrovert or introvert in expressing their own preferences. Introvert learners were usually less willing to express their own ideas and mostly tried to follow others' instruction. Other possible reasons for such findings might be the participants' linguistic background or their self-confidence

and their opportunity to use target language in such contexts.

Another possible reason might be the participants' motivation. As Zimmerman (2008) reported, self-regulation was strongly correlated with motivation. The other possible reason might be the participants' gender, which was not taken into account in this study. It needed to be noted that this study was conducted with a comparatively small sample size over a relatively short period. This implied that other studies with larger samples over longer experimental periods were needed before any generalization could be made.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study show that assessment type affects academic self-efficacy. Self-assessment is shown to be more effective in comparison with both peer-assessment and teacher-assessment. Based on the findings, it may be concluded that it is advisable to encourage self-assessment for the purpose of improving learners' academic self-efficacy. This means that concerning learners' academic self-efficacy and their significant positive relationships with self-assessment, teachers can create compatibility among learners to raise their self-beliefs about their capability to improve their class performance.

In addition, this study finds no statistically meaningful effect of assessment type on learners' general self-efficacy. In educational systems, interested teachers come to learn how to improve learners' self-efficacy to improve class performance. They may examine other assessment types in classroom contexts, and alter them to achieve desired outcomes. For example, they may choose to shift from self-assessment to peer-assessment, to teacher-assessment. This usually causes stress for learners and mostly makes them confused about classroom atmosphere. It can be concluded from the findings of this study that if teachers wish to improve learners' general self-efficacy and thus improve their class performance, they need a bit of careful thought. Since assessment types have no effects on general self-efficacy, enthusiastic teachers need to follow other suitable techniques, which are effective.

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