ES- SAOURA journal for human and social studies

ISSN: 2477-9881 EISSN: 2676-2153

Serial Number: 23 /Volume: 12
N°: 01 (2026), p 525-548

Self- and Peer-Assessment in Algerian Secondary School Classrooms: Pedagogical Potential and Contextual Challenges

التقويم الذاتي وتقويم الأقران في أقسام التعليم الثانوي الجزائرية: الإمكانات البيداغوجية والتحديات السياقية

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Received: 24/01/2026	Accepted: 10/06/2026	Published: 12/06/2026

Abstract: Assessment practices in Algerian secondary school EFL classrooms remain teacher-centred and examination-oriented, limiting opportunities for formative learning. This mixed-methods study combines a narrative literature review with a classroom-based investigation involving 75 secondary school students in Béchar to examine learners' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. Findings indicate that learners view these practices positively for enhancing awareness, motivation, collaboration, and communicative engagement. However, challenges related to assessment literacy, time constraints, and feedback reliability were identified. The study highlights their pedagogical potential and the importance of structured implementation and teacher support.
Keywords: EFL assessment, Algerian secondary education, self-assessment, peer assessment, formative assessment, learner autonomy

الملخّص: لا تزال ممارسات التقويم في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الثانوية في الجزائر تعتمد إلى حدٍّ كبير على المعلم والامتحانات، مما يحدّ من فرص التعلم التكويني. تعتمد هذه الدراسة منهجًا مختلطًا يجمع بين مراجعة سردية للأدبيات وتحقيق ميداني داخل القسم شمل 75 تلميذًا من التعليم الثانوي بمدينة بشار، بهدف دراسة تصورات المتعلمين حول التقويم الذاتي وتقويم الأقران (التقويم الثنائي). وأظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين ينظرون إلى هاتين الممارستين بإيجابية من حيث تعزيز الوعي بالتعلم، والدافعية، والتعاون، والتفاعل التواصلي. ومع ذلك، تم تحديد بعض التحديات المرتبطة بثقافة التقويم، وضيق الوقت، وموثوقية التغذية الراجعة. وتبرز الدراسة الإمكانات التربوية للتقويم الذاتي وتقويم الأقران ، وتؤكد أهمية التطبيق المنظم والدعم المستمر من المعلم.
الكلمات المفتاحية :تقويم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التعليم الثانوي الجزائري، التقويم الذاتي، تقويم الأقران، التقويم التكويني، استقلالية المتعلم.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Algerian secondary school EFL classrooms, assessment plays a central role in shaping both teaching practices and learning outcomes. Despite recent curricular reforms advocating a competency-based approach that emphasizes learner-centred instruction and formative assessment, classroom practices remain largely dominated by summative, examination-oriented assessment. The prevailing focus on written accuracy and final test performance continues to limit opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful communication, receive ongoing feedback, and develop reflective learning strategies, particularly in speaking and extended writing tasks.

Within this context, self- and peer-assessment have emerged in applied linguistics and assessment literature as promising formative practices that promote learner autonomy, reflection, and active engagement in the learning process. These approaches encourage learners to evaluate their own and their peers' performance against explicit criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses, and participate in collaborative feedback processes. Research has consistently shown that self- and peer-assessment can enhance learner autonomy, self-regulation, motivation, and communicative competence when effectively implemented in EFL settings (Andrade & Du, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Panadero, 2017).

Despite this strong theoretical and pedagogical support, a persistent research problem lies in the significant gap between the potential of self- and peer-assessment as formative learning tools and their limited, often superficial, implementation in real classroom contexts. In exam-driven educational systems such as Algerian secondary education, traditional summative assessment practices continue to dominate, while formative, learner-centred approaches remain underutilized. This situation is further complicated by contextual constraints such as large class sizes, time limitations, institutional expectations, and assessment cultures that prioritize results over learning processes. As a result, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how learners themselves perceive these practices and how they experience their implementation in everyday classroom settings.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine both the pedagogical value of self- and peer-assessment and their perceived effectiveness within the Algerian secondary school EFL context, while also exploring learners' experiences of implementing these practices in real classroom conditions.

To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. *How do Algerian secondary school EFL learners experience self- and peer-assessment activities in their English language classrooms?*

RQ2. *How do learners perceive the role of self-assessment in developing their learning autonomy in EFL classrooms?*

RQ3. *How do self- and peer-assessment activities influence learners' participation and engagement in classroom interaction?*

RQ4. *What challenges do learners experience when engaging in self- and peer-assessment activities in EFL classrooms?*

Based on these research questions and informed by previous research on formative assessment, learner autonomy, and collaborative learning, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1. *Learners report positive classroom experiences with self- and peer-assessment activities in English language lessons.*

H2. *Learners perceive self-assessment as contributing positively to the development of their learning autonomy in EFL classrooms.*

H3. *Self- and peer-assessment activities are perceived to enhance learners' participation and engagement in EFL classroom interaction.*

H4. *Learners report experiencing challenges when engaging in self- and peer-assessment activities in EFL classrooms, such as lack of confidence, unclear assessment criteria, and limited classroom time.*

2. Pedagogical Value of Self- and Peer-Assessment in EFL Learning

2.1 Learner Awareness and Self-Regulation

Self-assessment plays a key role in developing learners' awareness of their linguistic strengths and weaknesses. Through reflective evaluation, learners gradually develop the ability to monitor their progress and set realistic learning

goals, thereby strengthening metacognitive regulation of learning (Zimmerman, 2002; Andrade & Du, 2007). This metacognitive dimension is particularly relevant in secondary education, where students are often highly dependent on teacher judgment and have limited experience with reflective and self-directed learning (Little, 2007).

Recent empirical research in EFL and higher education contexts confirms that self-assessment can improve learners' metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning; however, its effectiveness depends strongly on teacher scaffolding, feedback literacy, and learners' familiarity with assessment criteria (Panadero, Brown, & Strijbos, 2017; Carless & Boud, 2018).

2.2 Feedback and Collaborative Learning

Peer assessment provides learners with opportunities to receive feedback that is often more immediate and accessible than teacher feedback. In large classrooms, peer interaction can function as a practical mechanism for increasing feedback frequency while fostering collaborative learning (Topping, 1998; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Through evaluating peers' work, learners engage in deeper attention to language form, content organization, and communicative effectiveness, which contributes to the development of both analytical and productive language skills (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

However, although peer assessment is widely recognized as a valuable formative strategy, research indicates that its effectiveness is not automatic. A meta-analytic synthesis shows that while peer assessment can have positive effects on academic performance, outcomes vary significantly depending on implementation quality and training conditions (Double et al., 2020). In EFL contexts specifically, studies emphasize that peer feedback quality is strongly influenced by learners' familiarity with assessment criteria, language proficiency, and the level of teacher scaffolding provided (Carless & Boud, 2018).

2.3 Participation and Communicative Skill Development

Self- and peer-assessment encourage active classroom participation by positioning learners as contributors rather than passive recipients of evaluation (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Topping, 1998). This shift is particularly beneficial for the development of speaking skills, which are often marginalized in examination-

oriented contexts. When learners engage in structured oral assessment tasks, they practice evaluating fluency, pronunciation, and clarity, thereby strengthening communicative competence through reflective and interactive language use (Swain, 2000; Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Although self- and peer-assessment are theoretically associated with enhanced communicative engagement (Swain, 2000), empirical findings suggest that their impact is context-dependent. Research in peer interaction studies shows that structured peer-assessment activities can increase oral participation and interactional quality (Sato & Ballinger, 2016), while other classroom-based studies indicate that learners may still rely heavily on teacher validation in speaking tasks unless sufficient scaffolding and clear assessment criteria are provided (Carless & Boud, 2018).

2.4 Learner Autonomy and Motivation

In examination-driven educational systems such as Algeria's, learner autonomy is often constrained, as instructional and assessment practices are largely shaped by high-stakes testing and summative evaluation requirements (Little, 2007). Within this context, self-assessment offers a structured pathway toward the development of autonomy by promoting learner responsibility, reflection, and goal-setting (Andrade & Du, 2007). However, autonomy should be understood as a gradual and scaffolded process that requires sustained pedagogical support and alignment with institutional expectations rather than an immediate transfer of responsibility to learners (Holec, 1981; Little, 2007).

Recent classroom-based research further emphasizes that learner autonomy is unevenly developed in practice, particularly in exam-oriented contexts where teacher authority remains central (Macaro, 2018; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2019). This evidence suggests that autonomy is not a universal outcome of self-assessment practices but rather a context-dependent construct shaped by institutional, pedagogical, and cultural factors.

3. Contextual Challenges in Algerian Secondary Schools

Despite their pedagogical benefits, self- and peer-assessment face several challenges in EFL classrooms. Reliability concerns frequently arise due to subjective judgments, social relationships among learners, and limited assessment

literacy (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000; Panadero et al., 2017). Cultural norms may further influence peer feedback practices, as learners may hesitate to provide direct criticism, which can reduce the depth and criticality of feedback exchanges (Carless, 2013). In addition, time constraints and large class sizes often limit the feasibility of implementing these practices in a sustained and systematic manner (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Teacher preparedness represents another significant challenge. Many teachers lack sufficient training in alternative assessment approaches and may perceive self- and peer-assessment as difficult to reconcile with high-stakes examinations such as the BEM and BAC. Without adequate professional development and institutional support, these practices risk being implemented in a superficial manner, thereby limiting their pedagogical impact.

Recent empirical research in EFL contexts confirms that issues related to reliability and validity remain central challenges in self- and peer-assessment implementation (Carless & Boud, 2018; Panadero et al., 2017). However, findings also suggest a tension between two perspectives: while some studies emphasize technical solutions such as rubrics, training, and structured feedback procedures, others highlight that deeper institutional and cultural factors play a more decisive role in shaping the effectiveness of these assessment practices.

4. Pedagogical Implications and Implementation Strategies

To address these challenges, self- and peer-assessment should be implemented through structured and context-sensitive approaches. The use of clear rubrics aligned with curricular objectives can enhance transparency, consistency, and reliability in learner evaluation (Andrade & Du, 2007; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Reflective journals and guided peer-feedback tasks further support the development of metacognitive awareness by encouraging learners to reflect on their performance, assessment criteria, and learning progress over time (Zimmerman, 2002; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Moreover, the gradual integration of these practices allows learners to adapt to new assessment roles and reduces resistance in traditionally teacher-centred classrooms (Little, 2007).

Technology-mediated assessment tools may also help alleviate time constraints and facilitate structured peer interaction, including anonymous feedback processes that can enhance learner engagement and feedback honesty (Carless & Boud, 2018).

Crucially, the effectiveness of these practices depends on teacher preparedness. Professional development should therefore focus on strengthening teachers' assessment literacy, classroom management strategies, and their ability to align formative assessment practices with national examination requirements, ensuring that self- and peer-assessment complement rather than conflict with high-stakes testing systems.

However, research cautions that the success of such strategies depends on sustained implementation and strong institutional support. Without these conditions, formative assessment innovations risk becoming procedural rather than transformative in classroom practice (Carless, 2015).

5. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design with a quantitative-led embedded qualitative component to investigate Algerian secondary school EFL learners' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. The design integrates quantitative data from a structured questionnaire with qualitative insights derived from classroom-based reflective activities, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of learners' perceptions in a real instructional context.

The methodological framework includes research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis techniques. The combination of methods was selected to capture both measurable trends and contextualized learner perspectives within an examination-oriented educational environment.

5.1 Research Design

The study employs a convergent embedded mixed-methods design**,** with quantitative data serving as the primary strand and qualitative data providing contextual enrichment.

The quantitative component allows for the measurement of learners' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment using structured Likert-scale items. The qualitative component, embedded within the instructional phase (reflective journals and classroom tasks), provides explanatory depth by capturing learners' experiences with assessment practices.

This design is appropriate because perceptions of formative assessment are both measurable (attitudes, tendencies) and experiential (learners' reflections and classroom interactions). The integration of both strands enhances validity through methodological triangulation.

Inferential statistical procedures (e.g., one-sample t-tests) were used to complement descriptive statistics and strengthen interpretation of quantitative results.

5.2 Participants

The participants were 75 Algerian secondary school students enrolled in first- and second-year classes in a public secondary school in Béchar. Participants were selected through convenience sampling due to accessibility constraints and institutional access.

All participants study English as a foreign language under the same national curriculum, ensuring pedagogical consistency. The sample reflects typical characteristics of Algerian secondary EFL contexts, including mixed proficiency levels, large class sizes, and teacher-centred instruction.

Although convenience sampling limits generalizability, it is appropriate for mixed-methods classroom-based research where contextual depth is prioritised over population inference.

5.3 Instruments

Data were collected using two complementary instruments:

1. Structured Questionnaire (Quantitative)

A Likert-scale questionnaire was designed to measure learners' perceptions of:

- self-assessment benefits
- peer-assessment benefits
- perceived challenges

Items were grounded in established literature on formative assessment, feedback literacy, and learner autonomy.

Validity

Content validity was ensured through alignment with established theoretical constructs and expert-informed item design.

Reliability

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ acceptable threshold).

2. Classroom-Based Reflective Tasks (Qualitative)

To complement the questionnaire data, qualitative data were generated through:

- reflective journals
- guided peer-feedback activities
- classroom assessment tasks (oral and written)

These qualitative sources captured learners' experiential engagement with self- and peer-assessment, particularly their perceptions of usefulness, difficulty, and classroom interaction patterns.

5.4 Procedure

The study began with a structured introduction of self- and peer-assessment through classroom activities conducted over one week. These included:

- oral presentations assessed using simplified rubrics
- peer-reviewed written tasks
- reflective journal entries

After this exposure phase, learners completed the questionnaire anonymously.

Qualitative data (journals and reflections) were collected during the implementation phase to capture immediate learner experiences.

Ethical considerations were respected, including voluntary participation, anonymity, and informed consent.

5.5 Data Analysis

A **mixed-methods analysis strategy** was employed. Quantitative data analysis involved the computation of means and standard deviations for each item and subscale in order to describe participants' response patterns. In addition, one-sample t-tests were performed against the neutral midpoint value (3.0) to examine the statistical significance and direction of learners' attitudes. The results were interpreted in terms of both statistical significance and overall tendencies in participants' perceptions. For the qualitative strand, reflective journals and classroom feedback were analysed using thematic analysis, which enabled the identification of key recurring themes, namely learner engagement, perceived difficulty of peer assessment, trust in peer feedback, and the development of learner autonomy. Finally, findings from both quantitative and qualitative components were integrated at the interpretation stage to provide a more comprehensive understanding of learners' perceptions. This methodological triangulation enhanced the validity of the study by linking statistical trends with qualitative classroom evidence and lived learner experiences.

6. Results

This section presents findings from both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Quantitative results report descriptive and inferential statistics related to learners' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. Qualitative findings provide thematic insights drawn from reflective journals and classroom tasks.

The integration of both data types allows for a more nuanced interpretation of learners' experiences, moving beyond numerical trends to explain how and why learners perceive self- and peer-assessment in particular ways within the Algerian EFL classroom context.

6.1 Benefits of Self-Assessment

Item	Mean Score (1–5)
Awareness of strengths and weaknesses	4.3
Goal setting	4.1
Motivation	4.0

Enhanced learning outcome	4.5

Table 1: Benefits of Self-Assessment

Overall, the results indicate a generally positive perception of self-assessment. The highest-rated item was "enhanced learning outcomes" (M = 4.5), followed by increased awareness of strengths and weaknesses (M = 4.3). Lower but still positive ratings were observed for motivation (M = 4.0) and goal setting (M = 4.1).

To determine whether these perceptions were statistically significant, one-sample t-tests were conducted against the neutral midpoint (3.0). Results indicated that all items were significantly above the neutral value ($p < .05$), suggesting that learners held positive attitudes toward self-assessment.

These findings suggest that learners perceive self-assessment as a useful tool for monitoring learning progress and developing awareness of performance.

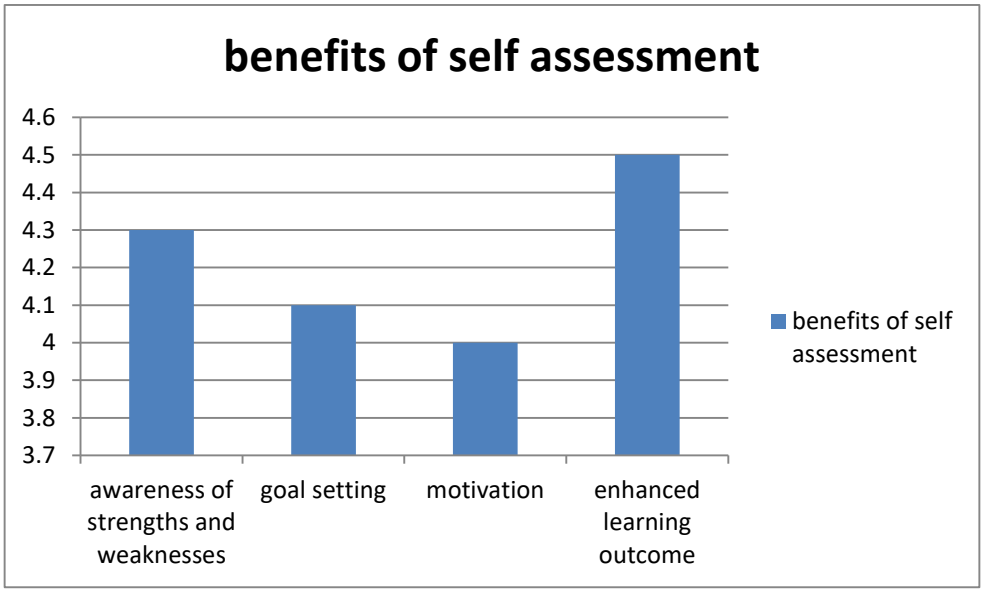


Figure 1: Benefits of Self-Assessment

6.2 Benefits of Peer-Assessment

Item	Mean Score (1–5)
Constructive feedback	4.2
Collaboration	4.0
Oral skill improvement	3.8
Written skill improvement	3.9

Table 2: Benefits of Peer-Assessment

The results show a generally positive perception of peer-assessment. Constructive feedback (M = 4.2) and collaboration (M = 4.0) were the most highly rated dimensions, indicating that learners value the interactive and social aspects of peer-assessment.

Slightly lower scores for oral (M = 3.8) and written skill improvement (M = 3.9) suggest that learners perceive peer-assessment more strongly as a collaborative and feedback-oriented practice than as a direct skill-improvement mechanism.

Inferential analysis (one-sample t-test) further confirmed that all items were significantly above the neutral midpoint ($p < .05$), indicating a positive orientation toward peer-assessment.

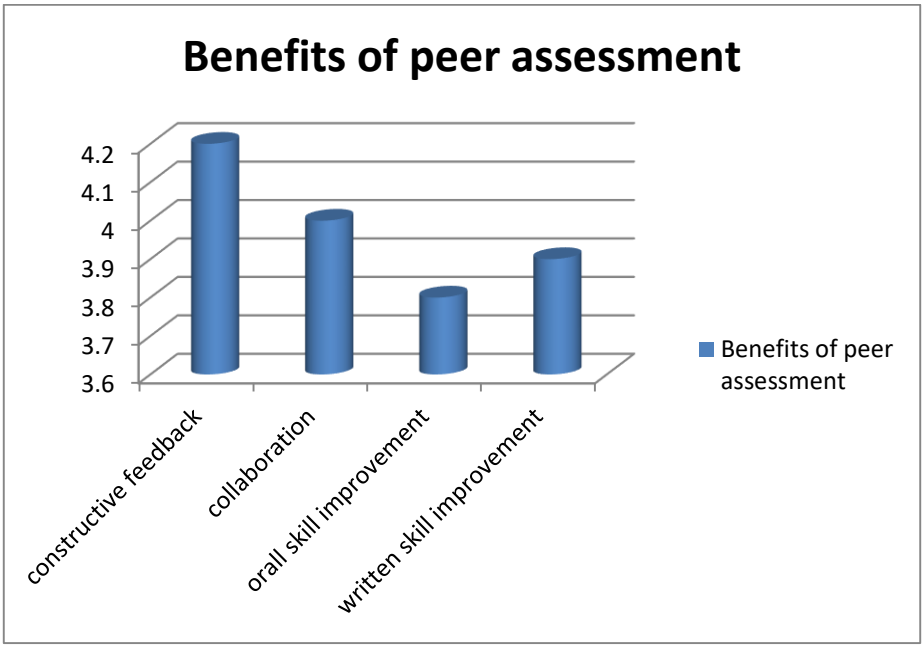


Figure 2: Benefits of Peer-Assessment

6.3 Challenges of Self- and Peer-Assessment

Challenge	Mean Score (1–5)
Time constraints	3.8
Inconsistency of feedback	3.6
Cultural reluctance to criticize peers	3.5
Bias and subjectivity	3.4
Negative feedback effects	3.2

Table 3: challenges of Self-and Peer-Assessment

The findings indicate that learners acknowledge several challenges associated with self- and peer-assessment. The most prominent challenge was time constraints (M = 3.8), followed by inconsistency in peer feedback (M = 3.6).

Moderate agreement was also observed for cultural reluctance to critique peers (M = 3.5) and bias in peer evaluation (M = 3.4), suggesting that interpersonal and cultural factors influence the effectiveness of peer-assessment.

Lower but still relevant concern was expressed regarding negative emotional effects of feedback (M = 3.2).

These results suggest that while learners generally value self- and peer-assessment, they also perceive structural and interpersonal limitations that may affect implementation quality.

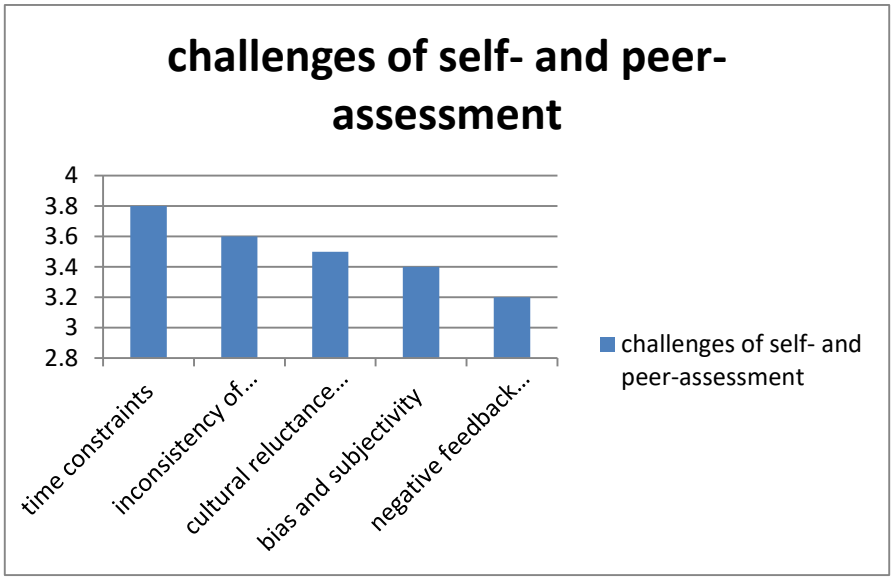


Figure 3: Challenges of Self- and Peer-Assessment

6.4 Qualitative Findings: Learners' Perceptions of Self- and Peer-Assessment

Question	Main Themes	Sample Student Responses
1. What do you like most about self-assessment activities in English class?	• Understanding mistakes • Knowing strengths and weaknesses • Feeling responsible	"Self-assessment helps me see my mistakes and correct them." "I know what I am good at and what I need to improve." "It makes me more

		responsible for my learning."
2. What do you like most about peer-assessment activities in English class?	• Getting quick feedback • Working with classmates • Learning from others	"My classmates give me feedback quickly." "I like working with my friends in class." "I learn new ideas from others' work."
3. What challenges do you face when performing self- or peer-assessment?	• Fear of hurting others' feelings • Not knowing how to assess • Bias	"I am afraid to criticize my classmates." "Sometimes I don't know if my assessment is correct." "Some students give good marks to friends."
4. How do you think self- and peer-assessment could be improved in your classroom?	• Clear instructions • Teacher help • More practice	"The teacher should explain the criteria more clearly." "We need the teacher to guide us." "More practice will help us assess better."

Table 4: Learners' Responses to Open-Ended Questions on Self- and Peer-Assessment

The qualitative data derived from learners' open-ended responses were analysed thematically in order to capture recurring patterns in students' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. Four main themes emerged: perceived benefits of self-assessment, perceived benefits of peer-assessment, challenges encountered during assessment, and suggested improvements for classroom implementation.

6.4.1 Perceived benefits of self-assessment

Learners generally viewed self-assessment as a useful tool for developing awareness of their learning progress. The most frequently reported benefits

included identifying mistakes, recognising strengths and weaknesses, and developing a sense of responsibility for learning.

Students indicated that self-assessment supported reflective learning by helping them evaluate their performance more critically. One learner noted:

“Self-assessment helps me see my mistakes and correct them.”

Another emphasized its role in self-awareness:

“I know what I am good at and what I need to improve.”

In addition, several responses highlighted increased learner responsibility, suggesting that self-assessment encourages greater ownership of learning processes.

6.4.2 Perceived benefits of peer-assessment

Peer-assessment was mainly appreciated for its social and interactive dimensions. Learners reported that receiving feedback from classmates provided immediate support and made classroom activities more engaging.

A recurring theme was the value of quick feedback:

“My classmates give me feedback quickly.”

Learners also highlighted collaborative learning as an important benefit:

“I like working with my friends in class.”

In addition, peer-assessment was perceived as an opportunity for knowledge sharing and exposure to different perspectives:

“I learn new ideas from others’ work.”

Overall, peer-assessment was associated more with interaction and feedback exchange than with formal evaluation.

6.4.3 Challenges in self- and peer-assessment

Despite generally positive attitudes, learners identified several challenges that affect the effectiveness of self- and peer-assessment practices.

A major concern was emotional discomfort during peer evaluation:

“I am afraid to criticize my classmates.”

This indicates that interpersonal relationships may limit the depth of peer feedback.

Another significant difficulty was lack of assessment competence:

“Sometimes I don’t know if my assessment is correct.”

This reflects limited assessment literacy and uncertainty about evaluation criteria.

Finally, issues of bias were also reported:

“Some students give good marks to friends.”

These findings suggest that both cognitive (lack of criteria knowledge) and social (friendship bias, fear of criticism) factors influence assessment quality.

6.4.4 Suggested improvements for classroom implementation

Learners also provided constructive suggestions for improving self- and peer-assessment practices in the classroom.

The most frequent recommendation was the need for clearer assessment criteria:

“The teacher should explain the criteria more clearly.”

Students also emphasized the importance of teacher guidance during assessment activities:

“We need the teacher to guide us.”

Finally, repeated practice was seen as essential for improvement:

"More practice will help us assess better."

These responses indicate that learners view self- and peer-assessment as skills that require structured instruction, gradual development, and continuous teacher support rather than immediate independent practice.

6.4.5 Interpretive Summary

Overall, the qualitative findings confirm and extend the quantitative results by providing deeper insight into learners' experiences. While students generally perceive self- and peer-assessment positively, their responses highlight the importance of teacher scaffolding, clear criteria, and sustained practice in ensuring effective implementation. The data further suggest that emotional and interpersonal factors play a significant role in shaping the success of peer-assessment activities in Algerian EFL classrooms.

7. Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the pedagogical value of self- and peer-assessment in Algerian secondary school EFL classrooms. **In relation to Research Question 1 (RQ1), which explored learners' experiences of self- and peer-assessment activities,** learners reported high levels of agreement regarding the benefits of these practices, particularly in relation to self-awareness, goal setting, motivation, and improvements in writing and speaking skills. These results also support **H1, which predicted that learners would report positive classroom experiences with self- and peer-assessment activities.** These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the role of formative assessment in promoting deeper learning and learner engagement (Andrade & Du, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). The quantitative findings, supported by descriptive statistics and inferential analysis (one-sample t-tests against the neutral midpoint), indicate that learners' perceptions were significantly positive across all measured dimensions.

Self-assessment emerged as especially effective in fostering metacognitive awareness. Students indicated that evaluating their own work helped them identify strengths and weaknesses and set realistic learning goals. In a traditionally teacher-centred educational culture, this finding is significant, as it suggests that Algerian learners are capable of assuming greater responsibility when provided with

structured guidance. This directly addresses **RQ2, which examined learners' perceptions of the role of self-assessment in developing learning autonomy, and supports H2, which predicted a positive contribution of self-assessment to learner autonomy.** This supports the view of learner autonomy as a gradual and scaffolded process, rather than an innate ability (Holec, 1981; Little, 2007). These quantitative trends were further reinforced by qualitative findings from reflective tasks, where learners emphasized increased awareness of their learning processes and responsibility for improvement.

Peer assessment was perceived as beneficial for enhancing collaboration and communicative competence, particularly in speaking tasks. Given the large class sizes typical of Algerian secondary schools, peer feedback appears to function as a practical alternative to limited teacher feedback. By engaging in peer evaluation, learners became more attentive to language form, organization, and clarity, reinforcing both receptive and productive skills. This relates to **RQ3, which investigated the influence of self- and peer-assessment on learners' participation and engagement, and supports H3, which predicted enhanced participation and engagement through these practices.** This aligns with social constructivist perspectives, which emphasize learning through interaction and shared responsibility. The qualitative data further supported this result, particularly through learners' reports of quick feedback and collaborative engagement during classroom activities.

However, the findings also reveal notable challenges that may limit the effectiveness of self- and peer-assessment if left unaddressed. Time constraints received relatively high mean scores, reflecting the pressure of dense curricula and exam-oriented instruction. In addition, concerns related to inconsistent feedback, subjectivity, and cultural reluctance to criticize peers indicate that learners may lack sufficient assessment literacy. These findings directly address **RQ4, which explored the challenges learners experience when engaging in self- and peer-assessment activities, and confirm H4, which anticipated difficulties such as lack of confidence, unclear criteria, and limited time.** These challenges were also reflected in qualitative responses, where learners expressed uncertainty about assessment accuracy and fear of peer criticism. Such triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the credibility of these findings. These challenges echo previous studies that emphasize the importance of training, clear

criteria, and teacher supervision to ensure reliability and learner confidence (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000; Panadero et al., 2017).

Notably, the Algerian examination system, particularly the BEM and BAC, continues to shape classroom practices and perceptions of assessment. Learners' concerns suggest that self- and peer-assessment may be viewed as secondary unless explicitly connected to examination preparation. Therefore, alignment between formative assessment practices and summative assessment requirements is essential to enhance acceptance and sustainability. The qualitative data further indicated that learners tend to value assessment practices more when they are clearly structured and linked to classroom success criteria.

To sum up, the discussion suggests that self- and peer-assessment should be viewed as complementary rather than alternative assessment practices. When implemented gradually, supported by rubrics, reflective tools, and explicit instruction, they can address key challenges in Algerian EFL classrooms, such as learner passivity, limited feedback, and marginalization of speaking skills. Teacher intervention remains crucial to maintaining balance, fairness, and pedagogical coherence. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study reinforces the argument that the effectiveness of these practices is highly dependent on structured implementation, sustained teacher support, and contextual alignment.

8. CONCLUSION

Self- and peer-assessment constitute valuable formative assessment practices for developing writing and speaking skills in Algerian secondary school EFL classrooms. The findings of this study indicate that learners perceive these practices positively in terms of increased awareness, motivation, collaboration, and communicative engagement, while also revealing challenges related to assessment literacy, time constraints, and peer reliability. Overall, these results answer the research questions by showing that self- and peer-assessment are generally well-received by learners, contribute to autonomy and engagement, and are associated with identifiable classroom challenges. They also confirm the study hypotheses, while highlighting that their effectiveness depends on contextual and pedagogical conditions. These findings suggest that the success of such practices is strongly dependent on structured implementation and sustained pedagogical support within exam-oriented educational contexts.

To enhance classroom effectiveness, self- and peer-assessment should be systematically supported through clear analytic rubrics, guided feedback training, and structured opportunities for practice that progressively build learners' assessment literacy. Teacher professional development is also essential to ensure that these practices are consistently integrated into classroom instruction and aligned with national examination requirements, rather than used as occasional or supplementary activities.

Future research should move beyond perception-based studies toward longitudinal classroom-based investigations examining sustained implementation, as well as teacher beliefs regarding formative assessment. In addition, intervention-based studies comparing different models of self- and peer-assessment across diverse Algerian EFL contexts would provide stronger evidence for their pedagogical effectiveness and scalability.

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Appendices

Questionnaire on Self- and Peer-Assessment in EFL Classrooms

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your experience with self- and peer-assessment activities in your English class. Your responses are anonymous and will be used only for research purposes.

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Grade level: ☐ 1st Year ☐ 2nd Year
4. Have you previously experienced self- or peer-assessment in English class? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part 2: Self-Assessment

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-assessment helps me identify my strengths and weaknesses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Self-assessment improves my motivation to learn English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Self-assessment helps me set realistic learning goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Self-assessment improves my writing skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Self-assessment improves my speaking skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 3: Peer-Assessment

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. Peer-assessment provides helpful feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Peer-assessment encourages collaboration and teamwork.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Peer-assessment improves my oral communication skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Peer-assessment improves my written communication skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Peer-assessment helps me better understand language accuracy and organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 4: Challenges of Self- and Peer-Assessment

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self- and peer-assessment take too much time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Feedback from peers is sometimes inconsistent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel uncomfortable giving critical feedback to peers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Self- and peer-assessment sometimes negatively affect my confidence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel unsure about how to assess myself or others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 5: Open-Ended Questions

1. What do you like most about self-assessment activities in English class?
   ……
   ……

2. What do you like most about peer-assessment activities in English class?
   .....
   .....

3. What challenges do you face when performing self- or peer-assessment?
   ……
   ……

4. How do you think self- and peer-assessment could be improved in your classroom?
   ……
   ……