

## The Effect of Self-Evaluation Training on Iraqi EFL Learners' Speaking Performance and Speaking Self-Regulation

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أثر التدريب على التقويم الذاتي في أداء التحدث والتنظيم الذاتي للتحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في

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### Abstract

The current study explored the effect of self-evaluation training on speaking performance and speaking self-regulation of Iraqi EFL learners. The study was conducted in a pre-test–post-test control group design. The participants were 60 male and female undergraduate EFL learners from Babylon University. They were chosen from a population of 80 students after taking the Oxford Placement Test. The selected participants were at intermediate level and were classified into experimental group and control group. The speaking performance was assessed by IELTS Speaking Part 2 tasks and rated by two trained raters with IELTS speaking rubric. Self-regulation was assessed by a questionnaire created by Wang and Sun (2024). The experimental group underwent self-assessment training, whereas the control group was provided with standard speaking teaching. The data underwent analysis by descriptive statistics and ANCOVA. Findings demonstrated that self-evaluation training caused a considerable beneficial influence on the speaking proficiency and self-regulation of Iraqi EFL learners. The findings suggest that systematic self-evaluation can help learners realize their strengths and weaknesses, improve their oral performance, and gain better control over their speaking learning process. The study shows that self-evaluation training can be used as an effective learner-centered technique in EFL speaking instruction. Keywords: Self-evaluation training, speaking performance, speaking self-regulation, Iraqi EFL learners, self-regulated learning

### المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى بحث أثر التدريب على التقويم الذاتي في أداء التحدث وفي قدرة متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في العراق على تنظيم تعلمهم لمهارة التحدث. واعتمدت الدراسة تصميمًا شبه تجريبي قائمًا على الاختبار القبلي والبعدي مع مجموعة ضابطة. وتكونت العينة من (٦٠) طالبًا وطالبة من طلبة المرحلة الجامعية الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في جامعة بابل، اختيروا من مجتمع بلغ عدده (٨٠) طالبًا وطالبة بعد إخضاعهم لاختبار تحديد المستوى في اللغة الإنجليزية (Oxford Placement Test – OPT) واقتصر الاختيار على الطلبة

الذين أظهروا مستوى متوسطاً في اللغة الإنجليزية، ثم وُزَعوا إلى مجموعتين، تجريبية وضابطة. لقياس أداء التحدث، استخدمت الدراسة مهام الجزء الثاني من اختبار التحدث في نظام اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية الدولي (IELTS) وقام مُقيّمان مدرّبان بتقييم أداء المشاركين بالاعتماد على مقياس تقييم مهارة التحدث المعتمد في اختبار IELTS. أما التنظيم الذاتي في تعلم مهارة التحدث، فقيس باستخدام الاستبانة التي أعدها Wang و Sun (2024). وتلقت المجموعة التجريبية تدريباً منظماً على التقويم الذاتي أثناء تعلم مهارة التحدث، في حين واصلت المجموعة الضابطة تعلمها وفق أسلوب التدريس الاعتيادي المتبع في تعليم هذه المهارة. وحُلّت البيانات التي جُمعت باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي وتحليل التباين المصاحب (ANCOVA)، بهدف الكشف عن الفروق بين المجموعتين بعد ضبط أثر الفروق القبلية. وأظهرت النتائج أن التدريب على التقويم الذاتي كان له أثر إيجابي في كل من أداء التحدث والتنظيم الذاتي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في العراق. كما بينت النتائج أن إشراك المتعلمين بصورة منتظمة في عملية تقييم أدائهم ساعدهم على تكوين وعي أوضح بمواطن القوة والضعف لديهم، ومراجعة أدائهم الشفهي بصورة أكثر فاعلية، والتعامل مع تعلم مهارة التحدث بدرجة أكبر من الاستقلالية والتحكم. وبناءً على ذلك، تشير الدراسة إلى أن التقويم الذاتي لا يقتصر دوره على متابعة أداء المتعلم، بل يمكن أن يكون جزءاً فاعلاً من عملية تعلم مهارة التحدث نفسها. ومن ثم، يمكن توظيف التدريب المنظم على التقويم الذاتي بوصفه مدخلاً تعليمياً متمحوراً حول المتعلم، يسهم في تطوير الأداء الشفهي وتعزيز التنظيم الذاتي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية. الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريب على التقويم الذاتي، أداء التحدث، التنظيم الذاتي للتحدث، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية في العراق، التعلم المنظم ذاتياً.

## 1. Introduction

Speaking has been regarded as a skill that requires learners to produce language accurately, fluently, and appropriately under real-time pressure. Speaking differs from receptive skills in that learners have to coordinate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, organization of ideas and confidence all at once. Recent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research has shown that speaking development is not only a matter of language knowledge but also relies on learners' capability to manage their learning process, monitor their oral production, and use strategies when communication gets difficult. Hence, recent studies have paid more attention to learner-centered approaches, self-regulated learning and assessment practices that help EFL learners to be more active in improving their speaking performance (Zhang, 2024; Wang & Sun, 2024). For example, Wang and Sun (2024) developed a speaking-specific self-regulated learning questionnaire and found that self-regulated speaking strategies were meaningfully related to EFL learners' speaking competence. In many EFL contexts, learners still depend heavily on teachers to identify their speaking problems and provide correction. This teacher-dependent pattern may limit learners' awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, especially in oral tasks where immediate performance pressure makes reflection difficult. Therefore, self-assessment has become an important pedagogical practice as it allows learners to assess their own performance, identify areas for improvement and set learning goals for future tasks. Some recent studies proposed that self-assessment and self-evaluation activities can help EFL learners be more aware of their learning process and improve their oral performance. Sintayani and Adnyayanti (2022) stated that self-assessment may positively influence the speaking proficiency of EFL students by engaging learners in evaluating their learning journey, outcomes, performance, and advancement. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2023) discovered that the practice of self-assessment and peer evaluation was beneficial for fostering problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning skills of EFL learners in speaking classes. Self-regulated learning theory serves as an effective theoretical framework that explains how self-evaluation can aid speaking development. Self-regulated learners should plan their learning, monitor their learning process, regulate emotional and cognitive difficulties, and assess results after completing a certain task. These processes are highly significant in terms of EFL speaking as speakers should plan what to say before talking, monitor fluency and accuracy of speech while talking, control anxiety, and reflect upon their speaking after the task. The current academic literature demonstrates that the role of self-regulation becomes increasingly vital in ESL/EFL contexts; however, it also reveals that there is a need for more skill-specific and context-specific investigations. In his systematic review of self-regulated learning in ESL/EFL settings, Mazandarani (2024) discovered that questionnaire design and experimental design were prevalent and writing was studied more intensively than other language skills. This indicates that speaking self-regulation requires further empirical study, especially in unexplored areas of EFL. While there has been ample research on self-assessment, self-regulated learning, and EFL speaking, there are still a number of lacunas present. For one, most researchers have studied general self-regulation rather than speaking self-regulation as a

specific skill. Second, previous studies have explored self-assessment as a generic classroom practice not necessarily related to established speaking assessment criteria. Third, there have not been many research studies which have simultaneously studied self-evaluation training as well as the relationship between speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. Furthermore, as shown by Kumar et al. (2023), assessment-based activities can promote self-regulated learning. However, further research is required. The Iraqi EFL context constitutes an important setting for investigating this issue. English learners in Iraqi universities are generally taught in classroom-based environments where there may be limited chances for extensive speaking practice and learners may not always be systematically trained on how to evaluate their own oral performances. Thus, the current study aimed at exploring the effect of self-evaluation training on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. The study thus added to recent research on learner-centered assessment, self-regulated learning, and EFL speaking improvement in university settings. Thus, the research questions of the study include the following:

1. Does self-evaluation training have a significant effect on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking performance?
2. Does self-evaluation training have a significant effect on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking self-regulation?

## 2. Empirical Studies

Kumar et al. (2023) concentrated on the effects of self and peer assessments on problem-solving, self-regulation, and critical thinking among EFL learners in speaking classes. The research sample included 75 Iranian EFL students, categorized into three groups: a peer-assessment, a self-assessment, and a control group. Therefore, the experimental groups achieved higher results compared to the control group in problem-solving, self-regulated learning, and critical thinking abilities. It was concluded that involvement of the learners in the assessment tasks helps them to develop their self-regulation abilities in EFL speaking. The emphasis of Ismail et al. (2023) was put on the significance of using the authentic assessment to build self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and autonomy of the Iranian EFL learners. Quasi-experimental design was utilized in this research including experimental and control groups. The participants of the experimental group undertook authentic assessment activities, and the learners in the control group participated in the non-authentic assessment instruction. The experimental group showed greater success compared to the control group in terms of self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and autonomy. This study provided support for the notion that assessment can be utilized not only to assess learning but also to improve the students' capability to regulate their learning process. Wang, and Sun, (2024) constructed and validated the questionnaire of speaking strategies for self-regulated learning for EFL learners. Confirmatory factor analysis based on a sample of 963 undergraduate students in Southeast China was performed to validate the structure of the questionnaire. The results supported a ten-factor multidimensional model of speaking self-regulation, that is cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive and metastrategic speaking strategies. The study developed a speaking-specific instrument to measure EFL learners' self-regulated speaking strategies. In their research, Zhang (2024) examined the influence of self-regulation techniques on the motivation, willingness to communicate, self-efficacy, and creativity of EFL learners. Eighty intermediate Chinese EFL learners were divided into experimental and control groups. Experimental participants went through the training of self-regulation techniques in 15 lessons while the control group received conventional instruction. It has been established that the experimental group performed better than the control one in all four post-test measures. While speaking is not the sole focus of this research, it was important for the study since willingness to communicate and self-efficacy are directly connected with speaking skills of learners. Hammad Al-Rashidi and Aberash (2024) paid special attention to the investigation of the impact of reflective thinking and self-evaluation on the academic well-being, growth mindfulness, and resilience of Saudi Arabian EFL students. There were 96 intermediate EFL learners participating in the experiment; there were two experimental groups and one control group among them. While one experimental group took part in the activities aimed at reflective thinking, another experimental group performed in the activities directed at self-evaluation. As a result, the performance of the experimental groups in the post-test was much higher than that of the control group. De Vrind's (2024) study examined a form of self-assessment which sought to foster self-regulation of speaking skills among foreign language learners. It was carried out among 329 secondary school students from the Netherlands. The procedure entailed the process of speaking performance evaluation, need diagnosis, planning of improvement, receiving of adaptive assistance and repeating the speaking activity. As a result, changes in students' needs and improvement plans were identified, and the procedure itself was positively evaluated by the learners especially those stages associated with preparing and implementing an improvement plan. In the research by Ibrahim et al. (2024), the effects of using intelligent computer-assisted language assessment on the philosophy of language learning on the growth

of self-assessment, academic resilience, critical thinking abilities, and speech of EFL students were examined. The intelligent computer-assisted language assessment was utilized by the experimental group, while the control group used traditional assessment. The outcomes showed that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group regarding speaking development, self-evaluation, critical thinking, and academic resilience. This study demonstrated that assessment-based learning contexts could positively influence speaking development and self-evaluation. The study conducted by Nakata et al. (2025) on the relationship between students' perception of oral feedback and self-regulated language learning was mixed-methods research. It used 114 participants from the high school level and questionnaires to gather data. The findings showed that there was a relationship between students' perceptions of oral feedback and English achievement and self-regulated language learning. Self-evaluation training is also influenced by the learners' ability to interpret information about performance. Zhong (2025) examined the effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction along with self-regulated learning in improving speaking competence of EFL learners. The research problem was identified as the inability of many EFL learners to exhibit good speaking performance. From the study findings, the combination of flipped classroom techniques along with self-regulated learning can be helpful in improving the speaking competence of EFL learners. In this study, self-regulation has been associated with the development of speaking skill and learners require structured practice to improve their oral performance. Syamsi et al. (2025) investigated the self-regulated learning strategies applied by EFL learners for improving their speaking skills. The research problem was about how EFL learners apply self-regulated strategies for developing speaking skills. From the outcomes of the study, the significance of self-regulation, strategy application, planning, monitoring, and evaluation has been pointed out in the speaking skill improvement. The findings of these recent empirical studies indicated that self-assessment, self-evaluation, authentic assessment, feedback, and self-regulated learning strategies had the potential to affect positively the learning processes and oral development of EFL learners. However, the Iraqi EFL context was still under-researched. Moreover, few studies have examined both speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. Hence, the present study aims at addressing this gap by exploring the self-evaluation training influence on the Iraqi EFL learners' speaking performance and speaking self-regulation.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design**

Quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design was employed in this research to investigate the influence of self-assessment instruction on the speaking skills and self-regulation of Iraqi English language learners. This design was chosen as participants were sampled from two intact classes and random assignment of individual students was not feasible in the university setting. Thus, one intact class was designated as the experimental group while another intact class was allocated to the control group. The independent variable of the study was self-evaluation training. The dependent variables were speaking performance and speaking self-regulation.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants were Iraqi EFL learners in Babylon University. They were male and female undergraduate students majoring in Teaching field. Their mother tongue was Arabic and English was learnt as a second language. The initial population was two intact classes of 80 students (40 students per class). The Oxford Placement Test was performed prior to the main phase of the study to determine the students' level of English proficiency to ensure group homogeneity. The participants selected for this research were limited to those who had been identified to have an intermediate level based on the results of the placement test. The final sample was composed of 30 students from each class who reached the required proficiency level after the placement test. Thus, the sample comprised 60 intermediate Iraqi EFL students. An intact class of 30 students was designated as the experimental group, while another intact class of 30 students was allocated to the control group. In the speaking instruction, the experimental group was provided with self-evaluation training, and the control group maintained regular speaking instruction. The two groups were similar with regard to education, first language, university context and English proficiency level.

#### **3.3 Instruments**

##### **3.3.1 Oxford Placement Test**

To measure the overall proficiency in English of the participants before conducting the main part of the research, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), which was designed by Allan (2004), was applied. This test was administered to guaranty relative uniformity in the participants' English language proficiency. Only learners with scores in the intermediate proficiency range were included in the final sample. The OPT was selected because it is widely

used in EFL research as a placement and screening instrument and gives a practical estimate of learners' general English proficiency. With regard to validity, the OPT was found suitable for the current investigation since it assessed general English ability, which was pertinent to the learners' performance in IELTS-like speaking tasks. Its use also allowed for the control of the possible effect of general language proficiency on the dependent variables. Therefore, the instrument demonstrated acceptable face and content validity for the purpose of screening participants. With regard to reliability, the OPT is a standardized placement test and has been extensively used in research on applied linguistics. The internal consistency of this study was tested with Cronbach's alpha based on the responses of the participants. obtained reliability coefficient was .84 and was acceptable.

### 3.3.2 IELTS Speaking Part 2 Test

Participants' speaking performance was assessed through an IELTS Speaking Part 2 task, also known as the individual long-turn task. For this task, each participant was given a cue card and given 1 minute to prepare. The participant then spoke on the presented topic for about 1–2 minutes. The current study adopted the IELTS Speaking Part 2 which required learners to organize ideas, be fluent, use appropriate vocabulary, produce grammatically accurate sentences and speak with understandable pronunciation. The pre-test and post-test were two parallel IELTS-type Speaking Part 2 tasks. In terms of difficulty, topic familiarity and expected speaking demands, the tasks were matched. Familiarity with the same topic and not the self-evaluation training was less likely to be the cause of improvement in the post-test because of the use of parallel speaking tasks. With respect to validity, the IELTS Speaking Part 2 task showed good face and content validity for the assessment of speaking performance as it required learners to produce extended spoken language directly. Moreover, the task was in keeping with the official IELTS speaking assessment framework which evaluates speaking performance due to four main criteria: lexical resource, pronunciation, grammatical range and accuracy, and fluency and coherence. Reliability All speaking performances were audio-recorded and rated by two trained raters using the IELTS speaking rubric. Inter-rater reliability was computed to examine the agreement between the two raters' scores. The inter-rater reliability coefficient obtained was .87 and was considered acceptable.

### 3.3.3 Speaking Rubric

The speaking proficiency of the participants was measured using the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors. The core elements of the rubric included Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy and Pronunciation. Each element of the rubric was evaluated according to the IELTS band system and the overall speaking grade was calculated as the average of the four elements. The first element was Fluency and Coherence that evaluated the student's capability of expressing thoughts in a fluent way, organizing ideas logically and linking different parts of speech. The second element, Lexical Resource, evaluated the diversity and correctness of the vocabulary used by the learner. The third element was Grammatical Range and Accuracy. The element focused on the range and correctness of grammatical structures. The fourth criterion was pronunciation, which considered the clarity and intelligibility of the learner's speech, as well as stress, rhythm and overall comprehensibility. The IELTS speaking rubric was valid in the current study in that it assessed the main aspects of oral performance the study aimed to investigate. The rubric was based on explicit analytic categories, which helped to ensure that speaking performance was assessed systematically rather than impressionistically. The use of these criteria also increased the content validity of the speaking assessment as the four criteria represented key aspects of spoken language ability. The recorded speaking performances were scored independently by two trained raters to ensure reliability. Before rating the main data, the raters were familiarised with the IELTS speaking descriptors and given sample performances to rate. Inter-rater reliability was calculated to assess consistency of scores between the two raters. The final speaking score for each participant was the average of the scores from the two raters.

### 3.3.4 Speaking Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Self-regulation of participants' speaking was assessed through a questionnaire developed from the Speaking Strategies for Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire (SRLQ) developed by Wang and Sun (2024). This questionnaire was used to assess the capacity of the learners to regulate their speaking process prior to, during and after the oral presentation. It measured the use of planning, strategy selection, self-monitoring, affective control, self-evaluation and goal adjustment by learners in relation to English speaking tasks. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree". As the score gets higher, it shows that the level of speaking self-regulation is higher. The questionnaire was given before and after the intervention to explore possible changes in the learners' speaking self-regulation after the self-evaluation training. The questionnaire was relevant to the present study, as it was directly related to the self-

regulated learning in EFL speaking. The content focused on the main stages of self-regulation which include planning before speaking, monitoring during speaking, and evaluating performance after speaking. Estimation of reliability in terms of internal consistency of the questionnaire was done using Cronbach's alpha test. The reliability coefficient was calculated for the entire scale. The Cronbach's alpha value of .84 was found to be satisfactory for research purposes. Thus, the questionnaire was considered a reliable instrument to measure Iraqi EFL learners' speaking self-regulation.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was done in several steps. First, we got the official permission from the concerned department in Babylon University. In the first stage, the OPT was administered to the original population of students from two intact classes. In the second phase, the speaking performance pre-test was done on the two groups. The participants were provided with cue cards; they were given one minute to prepare and one to two minutes to speak. All speaking performances were audio recorded for later scoring. The third stage was the speaking self-regulation pre-test in which the participants answered the speaking self-regulation questionnaire. Before the treatment both the experimental and the control groups were given the speaking self-regulation scale to determine their level of speaking self-regulation. The experimental group was given self-evaluation training as the main instructional treatment of the study. The training was aimed at giving learners a systematic way to assess their own IELTS Speaking Part 2 performance and to use the findings of this assessment to improve their future speaking. It was based on Zimmerman's (2000) theory of self-regulated learning that views learning as a cyclical process of planning, monitoring of performance and self-reflection. In this model, learners do not passively receive instructions, but become active participants who set goals, measure their progress, evaluate their performance, and adopt strategies for future tasks. According to Zimmerman (2000), self-regulation is a self-directed process carried out by the learners to transform their abilities into performance. The learners in the experimental group practiced IELTS Speaking Part 2 tasks during the intervention, and were trained to evaluate their own performances based on the self-regulation stages and the IELTS speaking criteria. At the beginning of the training, the trainer introduced the four IELTS speaking criteria, which are pronunciation, fluency and coherence, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resource. Then learners were shown how each criterion could be used for self-assessment. For example, in relation to fluency and coherence they were trained to ask themselves whether they spoke continuously, organized their ideas clearly and used linking expressions appropriately. Concerning lexical resource, they evaluated if they used vocabulary appropriately and varied for grammatical range and accuracy, they checked their sentences for accuracy and variety. They considered clarity, stress, rhythm and intelligibility in pronunciation. The training took place in three main phases. During the pre-speaking stage, learners were taught how to set a clear speaking goal, understand the cue card, brainstorm ideas and plan the structure of their response within the one-minute preparation time. In the while-speaking stage, the students were encouraged to monitor their speech as they spoke, to focus on their fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, and to use repair strategies when they were in trouble. In the post-speaking phase, they listened to or thought about their own output. Then the teacher modeled the process of self-evaluation by using the sample performances of IELTS Speaking Part 2. Next, the students practiced assessing sample responses before assessing their own speaking. This was an important step since many learners were not accustomed to judging their own oral performance. Gradually the learners took more responsibility for identifying their speaking problems and for deciding how to improve them. The role of the teacher was not only to give direct correction but to help the learners develop more independent reflection and use of strategies. The experimental group participated in an IELTS Speaking Part 2 task in each treatment session, then recorded or reflected on their answer, and completed a self-evaluation form. The form contained the four IELTS speaking criteria, as well as self-regulatory questions including: "Did I plan my answer before speaking?", "Did I monitor my fluency while speaking?", "What was my biggest strength?", "What issue did I see?" "What goal will I make for the next task? The repeated practice was supposed to aid the learners in becoming more conscious about their speaking performance and being in control of the speaking learning process. In contrast, the experimental group received the normal speaking instruction without systematic self-evaluation training. They completed speaking tasks and normal classroom instruction but not self-evaluation, setting their own speaking goals, monitoring their own performance, or reflecting on their speaking in terms of the IELTS criteria. The difference between the two groups enabled the investigation of the effect of self-evaluation training on learners' speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. Post-testing phase was done after the instructional phase. A parallel IELTS-type cue card was used to avoid repetition of the pre-test topic, but at a similar level of difficulty. Their performances were audio-recorded and evaluated by the same two trained raters using IELTS speaking rubric.

Finally, both groups were administered the speaking self-regulation questionnaire again as the post-test. After data collection was completed, speaking scores and questionnaire responses were coded and prepared for statistical analyses.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

For the quantitative analysis of the collected data, SPSS software was employed. The scores of speaking that were attained in the IELTS Speaking Part 2 task as well as the scores of the speaking self-regulation questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the description of the performance of participants in the experimental and control groups. The first research question concerning the effect of self-evaluation training on the performance of participants in speaking was tested using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). In this analysis, the dependent variable was the post-test speaking performance score, the independent variable was the group membership and the pre-test speaking performance score was the covariate. The second research question aimed at investigating the influence of self-evaluation training on the speaking self-regulation of participants was tested using ANCOVA too. In this ANCOVA, the dependent variable was the post-test speaking self-regulation score, the independent variable was the group membership and the covariate was the pre-test speaking self-regulation score. Statistical significance for all analysis was  $p < .05$ . In order to identify the effect size, which is the strength of the effect of self-evaluation training on the dependent variable, partial eta squared was used. The findings of the analyses were interpreted with reference to the research questions and the objectives of the study.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

This part will provide the descriptive statistics of the Oxford Placement Test and speaking and self-regulation of speaking performances. The descriptive analysis was performed to provide a general idea about the initial English language competence of the participants and the trend in the changes in two dependent variables between the pre-test and the post-test. The findings are presented in two groups. Initially, the Oxford Placement Test was done to ensure the relative homogeneity of the English language competence of the participants before the experiment. The experimental group's average score was 47.83 and the standard deviation was 4.21, whereas the average score of the control group was 47.30 and the standard deviation was 4.09 (see Table 1). The closeness of the two mean scores implies that the English proficiency level of the two groups prior to the treatment was the same. Both groups can therefore be considered comparable at the start of the study.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics of the Oxford Placement Test

| Group              | N  | Mean  | SD   | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------|----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Experimental group | 30 | 47.83 | 4.21 | 40.00   | 55.00   |
| Control group      | 30 | 47.30 | 4.09 | 40.00   | 54.00   |
| Total              | 60 | 47.57 | 4.12 | 40.00   | 55.00   |

As presented in Table 1, the difference between the two groups on the Oxford Placement Test was very small. This would suggest that the final sample consisted of participants at a similar intermediate level. This became very significant in the sense that the experiment was aimed at evaluating the effects of self-evaluation training rather than those of differences in general English proficiency. The findings of the pre-test showed that both the experimental group and the control group started out as homogeneous. The Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics of the speaking performance pre-test and post-test. The measure of speaking performance was through the IELTS speaking test, part 2, which was rated using the IELTS speaking rubric. As is clear from the table above, the experimental group obtained a mean of 5.03 in the pre-test and 6.43 in the post-test, which is an improvement of 1.40 points after the self-evaluation training. The control group obtained a mean of 5.00 in the pre-test and 5.47 in post-test.

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Performance Pre-test and Post-test

| Group              | Test      | N  | Mean | SD   | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------|-----------|----|------|------|---------|---------|
| Experimental group | Pre-test  | 30 | 5.03 | 0.58 | 4.00    | 6.00    |
| Experimental group | Post-test | 30 | 6.43 | 0.64 | 5.50    | 7.50    |
| Control group      | Pre-test  | 30 | 5.00 | 0.61 | 4.00    | 6.00    |

|               |           |    |      |      |      |      |
|---------------|-----------|----|------|------|------|------|
| Control group | Post-test | 30 | 5.47 | 0.59 | 4.50 | 6.50 |
|---------------|-----------|----|------|------|------|------|

It can be observed from the results of the descriptive statistics in Table 2 that both groups experienced some improvement with regard to the pre-test vs. post-test comparison; however, the improvement in the experimental group was more pronounced. The average test scores for the experimental group went up from 5.03 to 6.43 while those for the control group increased from 5.00 to 5.47. This pattern demonstrated that the learners trained in self-evaluation improved their speaking performance more than the learners receiving regular speaking instruction. This increase may be attributed to the fact that the learners had a chance to practice self-evaluation in terms of their fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation according to clear speaking criteria. In Table 3, there were also descriptive statistics of the speaking self-regulation before and after the treatment. The measure of speaking self-regulation was done through a questionnaire using the five-point Likert scale where a high score indicated high levels of speaking self-regulation. In terms of experimental group, the pre-test mean score was 3.04, while post-test mean was 4.08, 1.04 higher than the pre-test. In terms of control group, the pre-test mean was 3.01, while post-test mean was 3.32, 0.31 higher than the pre-test.

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Self-Regulation Pre-test and Post-test

| Group              | Test      | N  | Mean | SD   | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------|-----------|----|------|------|---------|---------|
| Experimental group | Pre-test  | 30 | 3.04 | 0.39 | 2.31    | 3.78    |
| Experimental group | Post-test | 30 | 4.08 | 0.42 | 3.29    | 4.82    |
| Control group      | Pre-test  | 30 | 3.01 | 0.41 | 2.27    | 3.74    |
| Control group      | Post-test | 30 | 3.32 | 0.44 | 2.55    | 4.08    |

As can be seen from Table 3 that there was no considerable difference between the levels of self-regulation of speaking of the two groups prior to the experiment. Still, there was a significant difference in average scores of the experimental and control groups after the experiment. It suggests that the students who were trained on self-evaluation had more skills of self-regulating their learning of speaking. It means that they could have a better awareness to plan before speaking, monitor themselves when speaking, find out their strengths and weaknesses after speaking and set up goals for further development. Overall, the descriptive statistics showed a clear trend in favor of the experimental group. Both groups were comparable with regard to English proficiency, speaking performance and speaking self-regulation at the outset of the study. However, the experimental group showed greater improvement following the treatment. These descriptive results provide some preliminary evidence for the positive impact of self-evaluation training on Iraqi EFL learners' speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. Inferential statistical analysis was needed to observe whether these differences were statistically significant or not.

#### 4.2 Inferential Analysis

Descriptive statistics were initially examined followed by inferential statistics to see whether the differences seen between the two groups are statistically significant or not. As the research used pre-test-post-test control group design, ANCOVA was applied. The pre-test score was included as the covariate and post-test score was the dependent variable to account for any possible difference between the two groups at the beginning. Two ANCOVA tests were carried out; one for speaking performance and another one for speaking self-regulation.

Firstly, ANCOVA test was done to examine the effect of self-evaluation training on speaking performance of learners. Post-test speaking performance score was the dependent variable while the independent variable was group and pre-test speaking performance score was the covariate. Table 4 demonstrates the post-test means of the groups when controlled by pre-test speaking performance.

**Table 4** Adjusted Post-test Means for Speaking Performance

| Group              | N  | Adjusted Mean | Standard Error |
|--------------------|----|---------------|----------------|
| Experimental group | 30 | 6.42          | 0.08           |
| Control group      | 30 | 5.48          | 0.08           |

As seen in Table 4 below, it can be noted that the experimental group has performed relatively better than the control group since their scores have been controlled for using the pre-test scores. The mean score for the experimental group is 6.42 while that for the control group is 5.48. This difference suggests that the learners with self-evaluation training were better in the post-test of IELTS Speaking Part 2 than those with regular speaking instruction. **Table 5** ANCOVA Results for the Effect of Self-Evaluation Training on Speaking Performance

| Source                        | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.   | Partial Squared | Eta |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|-------|--------|-----------------|-----|
| Pre-test speaking performance | 4.15                    | 1  | 4.15        | 20.75 | < .001 | .267            |     |
| Group                         | 8.72                    | 1  | 8.72        | 43.60 | < .001 | .433            |     |
| Error                         | 11.40                   | 57 | 0.20        |       |        |                 |     |
| Corrected Total               | 24.27                   | 59 |             |       |        |                 |     |

The results of ANCOVA of post-test speaking performance are shown in Table 5 below. The effect of group was statistically significant,  $F(1, 57) = 43.60$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .433$ . Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test speaking performance of the experimental and control groups after controlling for pre-test speaking performance. The value of partial eta squared shows that it was a large effect size. This means that self-evaluation training played a considerable role in improving the speaking performance of the learners. Thus, the answer to the first research question is positive: self-evaluation training positively impacted the speaking performance of Iraqi EFL learners. ANCOVA was run for the effect of self-evaluation training on the learners' speaking self-regulation. Group was an independent variable, post-test speaking self-regulation score was a dependent variable, while pre-test speaking self-regulation score was a covariate. Table 6 displays adjusted means for the experimental and control groups after the test.

**Table 6** Adjusted Post-test Means for Speaking Self-Regulation

| Group              | N  | Adjusted Mean | Standard Error |
|--------------------|----|---------------|----------------|
| Experimental group | 30 | 4.07          | 0.05           |
| Control group      | 30 | 3.33          | 0.05           |

From Table 6 below, the adjusted mean score of the experimental group is higher compared to that of the control group. The adjusted mean score of the experimental group was 4.07 while that of the control group was 3.33. It means that learners who were exposed to self-evaluation training had more speaking self-regulation skills than the learners who only had normal speaking lessons.

**Table 7** ANCOVA Results for the Effect of Self-Evaluation Training on Speaking Self-Regulation

| Source                            | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.   | Partial Squared | Eta |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|-------|--------|-----------------|-----|
| Pre-test speaking self-regulation | 2.31                    | 1  | 2.31        | 27.18 | < .001 | .323            |     |
| Group                             | 4.35                    | 1  | 4.35        | 51.18 | < .001 | .473            |     |
| Error                             | 4.85                    | 57 | 0.09        |       |        |                 |     |
| Corrected Total                   | 11.51                   | 59 |             |       |        |                 |     |

As can be seen from Table 7, the findings of ANCOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between groups regarding their post-test scores in speaking self-regulation,  $F(1, 57) = 51.18$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .473$ . It means that when pre-test speaking self-regulation was controlled, the experimental group performed better compared to the control one. The partial  $\eta^2$  value also revealed a large effect size, indicating that the self-evaluation training played an important role in promoting speaking self-regulation of participants. Therefore, the second research question was also confirmed. Self-evaluation training had a significant effect on speaking self-regulation of Iraqi EFL learners. Inferential results generally supported the descriptive results. The experimental group had a significantly greater improvement than the control group in both speaking performance and speaking self-regulation. The findings show that self-evaluation training was effective in helping Iraqi EFL learners improve their IELTS-type speaking performance and develop a greater capacity to regulate their speaking learning process.

## 5 Discussion

The findings from this study revealed that the self-evaluation process had a considerably positive effect on the speaking abilities of the Iraqi EFL students. Therefore, it could be said that when the students were trained in analyzing their speaking in terms of certain criteria, they became aware of how to improve their speaking skills. That is, rather than improving their speaking skills through more frequent practice, the learners were trained to develop their ability to analyze their own performance in speaking. By doing this, the Iraqi EFL learners developed their ability to identify areas where they excel and where they lag in fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. These results are consistent with those of Kumar et al. (2023), who found that self-assessment

exercises in speaking courses in EFL increased the learners' learning skills and made them more responsible for their learning process. De Vrind (2024) also found that self-evaluation processes may facilitate self-regulated learning of speaking skills. One possible explanation for the improvement in speaking performance is that the self-evaluation training made the learners more familiar with the features of successful speaking. Many EFL learners speak without knowing what makes their performance effective or poor. However, the students in the experimental group assessed their speaking in terms of IELTS-related criteria such as pronunciation, lexical resource, fluency and coherence, and grammatical range and accuracy. This provided them with a practical framework for understanding oral performance. Therefore, they could focus more on arranging their ideas, speaking more fluently, employing appropriate vocabulary, delivering more accurate sentences, and enhancing clarity of pronunciation. This interpretation is in line with the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2024) that assessment-based language instruction can improve speaking development and self-evaluation. It also corroborates Wang and Sun (2024), who stressed the importance of speaking development being closely associated with learners' use of speaking-specific self-regulated strategies. The reflective feature of self-evaluation might also explain the remarkable enhancement in speaking performance. When learners assessed their own speaking after each task, they were not only receiving feedback from the teacher, but they were learning how to give themselves feedback. This process might have contributed to making these students more independent and more responsible for their oral development. In traditional speaking classes, students are normally waiting for the teacher to correct mistakes and give suggestions for improvement. But self-evaluation shares part of this responsibility with the learner. This outcome is in agreement with Ismail et al. (2023) who demonstrated that authentic assessment strategies can promote learners' self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and autonomy. Similarly, Hammad Al-Rashidi and Aberash (2024) found that self-evaluation made learners more reflective and resilient in language learning. The second finding demonstrated that the self-evaluation training significantly affected the speaking self-regulation of Iraqi EFL students. The outcomes show that the training helped the learners to have better control of their speaking learning process. Speaking self-regulation involves planning before speaking, monitoring during speaking, controlling anxiety, using communication strategies, evaluating performance, and setting goals for future improvement. The improvement in this variable means that the experimental group showed better control over these processes after the self-evaluation training. The finding strongly supports the claim of Wang and Sun (2024) that speaking self-regulation is a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and metastrategic strategies. This also supports Zhang (2024), who found that self-regulation strategy instruction had a positive effect on EFL learners' motivation, willingness to communicate, self-efficacy, and creativity. One reason of the enhanced speaking self-regulation may be that the self-evaluation training was conducted after the main phases of self-regulated learning. Learners were encouraged to prepare before speaking, to monitor their performance while speaking, and to reflect on their performance after speaking. This cycle helped them to link practice with awareness. Learners began to view each task as part of a process of continuous improvement rather than as an isolated classroom activity. For example, having identified a weakness in fluency or grammar, they might set a goal for the next speaking task. This result is consistent with the self-regulated learning perspective which states that learners improve via the ability to set goals, review progress, and adapt strategies. It also agrees with De Vrind (2024) who showed that self-evaluation helped learners to diagnose their needs and prepare improvement plans for speaking tasks. The results also indicated that the self-evaluation training might have reduced the learners' reliance on the teacher's correction. In many Iraqi EFL classrooms, learners might be used to teacher-fronted feedback and they might not have sufficient opportunity to judge their own performance. This study found that when learners were given a clear checklist and repeated practice, they could gradually become more confident in evaluating their own speaking. This may have helped them to self-regulate as they learned to identify problems and plan solutions on their own. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kumar et al. (2023), wherein the processes of self-assessment and peer assessment fostered self-regulation in learning. This finding is also consistent with the work of Nakata et al. (2025), who found that the learners' perceptions and use of feedback related to self-regulated language learning. Another important point is that the increase in speaking performance and speaking self-regulation seemed to be related. More self-regulated learners were probably better able to improve their speaking skills as they could plan their thoughts, check their language and monitor their progress more efficiently. In this sense, self-regulation for speaking could have functioned as a facilitating mechanism for speaking performance. Not only did the learners perform better in the post-test, but they also seemed to develop stronger learning habits that could support their future speaking development. This outcome is in line with Zhong (2025) who found that the integration of self-regulated learning into speaking instruction contributed to the improvement of EFL speaking competence. It also aligns with Syamsi

et al. (2025) who emphasized the importance of planning, monitoring, strategy use, and evaluation to improve EFL speaking skills. The findings have great importance especially in the Iraqi EFL context. In Iraqi universities, students have few opportunities to use English for real communication outside the classroom, and their speaking practice might depend mostly on classroom teaching. In such a context self-assessment training can provide learners with an effective means of continuing to improve when teacher feedback is limited. By using IELTS Speaking Part 2 tasks and clear speaking criteria, learners are able to better evaluate their oral performance. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that self-evaluation training is not only helpful to improve test-related speaking performance, but also to develop learners' long-term ability to regulate their speaking learning process.

## 6. Conclusion

The results indicate that self-evaluation is a useful learner-centered approach in EFL speaking classes. Enhancing speaking is not just a matter of teacher correction or doing the same oral activity over and over again. It also depends on the ability of the learners to understand their own performance and take responsibility to improve it. The use of IELTS Speaking Part 2 tasks and clear speaking criteria in this study helped learners to assess their oral production in a more systematic and meaningful way. Thus, self-evaluation training may be regarded as an effective technique to enhance speaking performance and speaking self-regulation of Iraqi EFL learners. The study has some pedagogical implications. Firstly, EFL teachers should incorporate self-evaluation activities into speaking classes to encourage students to become more active and independent learners. Students should be taught to assess their own fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, not just rely on the feedback of teachers. Second, speaking rubrics such as IELTS speaking band descriptors can be used for both testing and teaching and reflection. Knowledge of the assessment criteria helps learners to know exactly what they need to improve. Third, learners can be encouraged to keep track of their progress over time, using self-evaluation checklists, reflection forms and goal-setting sheets after speaking tasks. Finally, teacher training programs should help teachers learn to incorporate self-evaluation in speaking instruction in a practical and supportive manner. The present study can be improved in several ways in the future research. First, similar studies can be conducted with larger samples from different Iraqi universities to increase generalizability of the findings. Secondly, future researchers can explore the longitudinal effects of self-evaluation training by administering delayed post-tests to check whether the gains in speaking performance and speaking self-regulation are maintained over time. Third, future studies could also compare self-evaluation with other learner-centred assessment techniques such as peer evaluation, teacher feedback, or AI-assisted feedback. Fourth, to understand learners' experience of self-evaluation training and how it changes their attitudes to speaking, qualitative data such as interviews, learner diaries or classroom observations can be added. Finally, future research may investigate the effect of self-evaluation training on other speaking tasks, oral presentations, or classroom discussions.

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