A review of research on student self-assessment in second / foreign language writing

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Abstract

The present article reviews the research on writing Self-Assessment (SA) conducted in the period of 2000 - 2020. The article discusses the theoretical foundation for SA following the review of conceptualization of SA by various researchers. We were particularly interested in (i) examining whether the concept of SA has witnessed an expansion during the two decades in English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) writing and (ii) determining the components that were found interconnected to the concept of SA in the writing context. The findings related to the first objective indicate that the SA has expanded in its conceptualization; however, its definition and application are expected to broaden. As a result of analyzing the studies, based on the second objective, the following themes emerged: SA and training students, SA and the dialogue between students and teachers, SA and teacher training, SA and affective variables, SA and cultural components, SA and age, SA and instrumentation, SA and exemplars, SA and teacher feedback, SA and prior experience, SA and conducive environments, SA and contextualizing SA items. The review shows an important role of the components in the concept of SA in the EFL/ESL writing context; however, studies in this regard are scarce. Another group of studies that emerged was those that examined perceptions towards SA. We conclude with a critical reflection on the reviewed literature and recommend new directions for further studies.

Keywords: Self-Assessment (SA), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), ESL/EFL writing

Introduction

An emphasis on the need for student-centered learning resulted in a shift of focus from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness approach. Out of the concept of student-centeredness, the notion of autonomous learning in

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language learning evolved. It encouraged learners to be responsible for and to self-invest in their own learning and to be actively involved in their own assessment process instead of only relying on the teachers. As a result of the growing focus on learner autonomy, Self-Assessment (SA) has gained much attention. A need to encourage SA is undisputedly accepted today at all educational levels.

There are two views regarding SA. The first refers to SA as an instructional tool whereas the second refers to SA as a measurement tool. Regarding SA as an instructional tool, there are many studies indicating the significance of SA in developing the various language skills effectively (Birjandi & Hadidi, 2010; Dragemark-Oscarson, 2009; Javaherbakhsh, 2010; Matsuno, 2009). SA as a measurement tool measures learners' understanding level of their knowledge and skills in writing (Butler & Lee, 2010). Besides being an instructional tool, SA in writing indicates the use of a teaching method that stimulates writers' thinking of ideas that are uniquely individual and original by evaluating and responding to their own writing (Nielsen, 2014). In both perspectives, SA in fostering writer's creative and analytical 'voice' in writing (Khodadady & Khodabakhshzade, 2012) has gained much attention in recent years; however, researchers still seem to be in a state of confusion when it comes to the concept of SA in writing itself. The confusion may lie in the fact that the concept has still not progressed from the notion of SA as a 'means to measure writing' to SA as a 'certain writing strategy'. In an attempt to review the recent studies on SA in the context of EFL/ESL writing, our objectives in this article are specifically to:

   (i) investigate the expansion in definition of SA in relation to EFL/ESL writing between 2000 and 2020, and

   (ii) examine the components interconnected with the concept of SA in the EFL/ESL writing context.

Theoretical foundation of SA

Reflection is a foundational principle and process underlying theories of SA in L2 writing classrooms. From the perspective of constructivist theory, SA considers the learner an active agent in knowledge acquisition process. This theory emphasizes learning outcomes as a result of knowledge construction process and refutes learning as a stimulus-response phenomenon. On the contrary, it is a process that involves self-regulation and development of conceptual structures through abstraction and reflection. Self-regulated learning (SRL) provides a theoretical framework to the concept of SA by emphasizing an active role of learner in a process of learning by setting goals, monitoring, regulating, and controlling cognition, behavior, and motivation guided by set goals and the environment (Panadero, Brown, &

Strijbos, 2016).

The second wave of constructivism suggests that the environment of the learners and the process of self-regulation shape them. In writing, knowledge relies on learner- teacher interaction in a specific social environment. Despite providing guidance, teachers cannot fully transfer knowledge. However, student-writers use the guidance provided by teachers to develop awareness of their own writing, learning to evaluate and regulate their learning process (Wong & Mak, 2018).

SA is often associated with metacognition, or the learners' ability to assess their own cognition. SA is emphasized as the most significant skill in the process of self-regulation and self-directed learning. Control of language learning process and the learning environment relies on appropriate use of affective, metacognitive, and social strategies which guarantee self-directed learning. Learning happens when learners have the ability to determine their needs, and have freedom to take action for meeting those needs. Lack of either accurate SA or autonomy will not help the growth of self-directed learning (Rivers, 2001).

Social constructivists claim that for metacognition to occur independently, it has to rely on an interaction with experts. In the context of writing classroom, strategies are modeled for students which involve interaction between students and teachers in the form of feedback and guided practice. This helps in developing the metacognitive skills of learners. Developing metacognitive skills facilitates SA and makes students aware of what to learn, how to learn, and how to measure its effectiveness (Lee & Mak, 2018).

Methodology of the review

The relevant studies on SA in writing were searched through Science Direct and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses databases published between 2000 and 2020. For research articles, we restricted our search to Scopus-indexed journals. In our search, the key terms which we entered included 'self-evaluation' and 'self-assessment'. As a result of the search, around 33,000 results yielded in the area of SA in different disciplines, predominantly in medicine and psychology. To limit the search, additional search terms of 'Writing', 'ESL', and 'EFL' were included. To refine the search, the access type was limited to open access articles, conference proceedings, and review papers. For doctoral theses, the database was restricted to ProQuest Dissertation and Theses which is the largest and most up-to-date collection from institutions all over the world. The thesis search was restricted only to Doctoral level because of its advanced, novel, and broader contribution to the field. The search in SA and writing yielded around 600 results. However,

mainly the found literature yielded results in SA in oral or other language skills. The search was restricted to Foreign/Second language Writing. We screened the articles by reviewing their titles and abstracts. Those that did not meet the selection criteria were excluded. The profile of the selected articles is shown in Appendix A which indicates the setting of the studies along with their findings and limitations.

Findings

This section discusses the results of our review following the order of our objectives mentioned above. First, we will deal with the definition of SA, and then we will review the components interconnected with SA under twelve categories (1) SA and training students, (2) SA and the dialogue between students and teachers, (3) SA and teacher training, (4) SA and affective variables, (5) SA and cultural components, (6) SA and age, (7) SA and instrumentation, (8) SA and exemplars, (9) SA and teacher feedback, (10) SA and prior experience, (11) SA and conducive environments, (12) SA and contextualizing SA items.

Expansion in definition of SA

Andrade (2019) in his review of SA raises a question 'What is SA, and what is it not?' by referring to a wide variety of activities, ranging from providing a sad or happy face to a story, estimation of correct answers number on a math test, use of a checklist to recognize strengths and weaknesses in essay and to write a reflective journal.

Although these activities are likely to provide a chance of SA, the complication arises when they do not seem converging on a single idea or thought of providing a unanimous standard definition of SA (Andrade & Du, 2007). Table 1 summarizes several attempts by researchers to define the concept of *SA*.

Together these definitions outline the concept of SA as an implementation of different techniques or standards to self-evaluate one's capabilities in regard to some certain academic work with a purpose of improving performance and meeting the stated goals. There are a number of characteristics recognized by the researchers to define SA. Much of their emphasis is on describing SA as a practice that involves students in determining the characteristics of a good work and implementing that practice to a given task. Boud (1999) argues what is happening under the guise of SA activities has still not determined clearly what actually constitutes 'good practice in SA'. In addition, these definitions conceptualize SA as an individualistic activity based on an end product. On the other hand,

the concept of SA is also proposed as an on-going process informing moment-to-moment adjustments in an assigned task. Andrade and Du (2007) add that the expansion in the definition of SA should recognize it as either a formative or a summative assessment process.

Table 1. Definitions of SA

Reference	Definition	In a nutshell
Boud (2000) Zimmerman (2002)	Recognizing learner's weaknesses and strengths with a purpose to make improvement in the learning outcomes	Identification of one's capabilities
Harris and McCann (1994)	Involving learners' needs and expectations, worries and problems, feelings about their own (learning) process, reactions to the methods and materials being used, and thoughts about the course in general	Affective and cognitive mechanism
Bachman (2000)	Applying criteria to an assigned task to make judgments about the level to which these criteria are met	Application of criteria for decision making
Cassidy (2007)	Taking responsibility for one's own learning and performance	Accountability
Andrade and Valtcheva (2009)	A formative process which requires students to reflect on the quality of their work to evaluate if it meets the stated goals and criteria, and to revise accordingly	Continuous assessment
Gregory, Cameron, and Davies (2011)	Reflecting on the quality of work to judge the degree of its reflection through explicitly stated goals or criteria, following revision accordingly	Reflection on performance
Brown and Harris (2013)	Evaluative and descriptive act carried out by students regarding their own tasks and abilities	Evaluation of performance
Panadero et al. (2016)	A wide-ranging variety of techniques which require students to describe (i.e., assessing) and assign merit or worth (i.e., evaluating) to qualities of their own learning processes and products	Learning techniques, Reflection on performance

The emphasis of researchers is on defining SA as personal responsibility; however, researchers have been failing to consider SA as a mutual responsibility shared between learners and teachers. Similarly, the cognitive aspect of SA is repeatedly recognized whereas its affective aspect

has received little attention. To establish a clear definition of SA, the neglected aspects need a better understanding.

Components interconnected with SA concept in writing context

In this section, we present the themes that emerged as a result of our review of the previous studies in the area of SA and ESL/EFL writing.

SA and training students

Researchers recommended training students to assess their own writing (Bowman, 2017; Mazloomi & Khabiri, 2016; Ross, 2006; Vasu, Yong, Nimehchisalem, & Sabariah, In Press; Young, 2000). Training helps students focus on specific aspects of their performance, and redefine standards that determine their successful implementation (Nielsen, 2011). Young (2000) reported training students to self-assess as useful since she observed that the students who were trained to assess their own work scored significantly higher. This finding is supported by Ross (2006) who emphasizes that specific student training can enhance the benefits of SA. In a similar vein, AlFallay (2004) emphasizes training contributes in the development of learners' SA and self-regulation skills through observing SA model provided by their teachers, and opportunities for practicing it. However, insufficient training is likely to result in poor performance of learners in SA (AlFallay, 2004).

The use of checklist has also been suggested by Liu and Brantmeier (2019). In their study on assessing writing abilities of Chinese learners, they showed that designing SA checklists that contextualize learning content and objectives of that unit by teachers can contribute to the students' clear understanding of the SA process. Providing students with SA experience has been considered essential in nurturing the students SA capacity (Vasu, Ling, & Nimehchisalem, 2016). Lacking SA experience is likely to affect the SA process by making students unconfident in assessment decisions. It leaves learners uncertain about evaluating themselves as accurately as teachers do, regardless of the training that the learner receives (Xu, 2019). Also, Ferry (2020) highlighted that an encouraging and favorable classroom environment can increase the effectiveness of SA on writing performance of students.

SA and dialogue between students and teachers

Young's (2000) study came up with findings supporting interactional environment for SA attained through communication. She emphasized student-instructor interaction in the process of self-assessing writing which encourages students to talk about what they are thinking and doing that will result in learning more (Garcia, 2011; Young, 2000). Dialogue has been

found as the most effective means in the process of self-assessing writing. It helps students in developing their understanding of teachers' expectations and standards and comprehending teacher feedback which they respond to through revising their writing (Nielsen, 2011). Baxa (2015) who used SA and dialogue as a tool of providing feedback argues that dialogue can help in generating feedback which students can use for improving their writing. In fact, Andrade and Du (2007) proposed conversations between teachers and students as a means to address the tension between them about the matches and mismatches in defining criteria for a given assignment.

SA and teacher training

Young's study (2000) raised the question about teachers training themselves for teaching writing which may be considered the most overlooked component in ESL/EFL education. The participant teachers in Dragemark-Oscarson's study (2009) also re-voiced this concern who although had five years of teaching experience, but they were not aware of the conception of SA practices. This overall situation reflects back to the most overlooked component in ESL/EFL education that is 'Teacher' him/herself. How much teacher is trained to help students in SA? This finding is supported by Ross (2006) who reported a pressing need of training teachers to teach students the skills of SA. However, based on this concern of training teachers for assessment purpose, it is noticeable that in Nielson's (2011) study, the teachers were trained to implement the assessment method which resulted in more valid findings. Involvement of teachers through proper training to use the method in classroom is neglected in previous studies. This shows that training and teachers' feedback play a dynamic role in the development of students' ability for assessing themselves accurately. Moreover, it indicates the development in the teachers' awareness regarding the points which they have to emphasize in the classroom is helpful for students to accomplish their goals (Mazloomi, & Khabiri, 2016).

SA and affective component

The term black box used by Black and William (1998) emphasizes affective mechanisms of SA. They argue that some input sources such as standards, resources, teachers, and requirements are fed in the box resulting in certain outputs such as more competent and knowledgeable students, and their satisfactory levels of achievement. However, what is unknown yet is what happens inside. It arises the question 'Does it affect learners' existing performance and desired outcome?' Similarly, Lui (2017) emphasized investigating the notion of affective mechanism which students experience when engaged in assessing their own learning. In this regard, Young (2000) found the process of SA stressful for students while judging their own

performance. It clearly indicates that the process of SA possibly involves emotional issues, such as stress. In the similar vein, Xu (2019) argues that while evaluating their own product, students may feel uneasy. An important point to consider is that despite the various available SA tools, the potential of SA in alleviating emotional issues is still unclear. The affective factor notion reemerged in Nielson's study (2011) who reported motivation as a highly significant factor for SA. Similarly, Bowman (2017) reported that students' sense of self-efficacy was boosted through the process of SA. Similar findings indicted that SA increases motivation, confidence and mindfulness while reducing anxiety (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Elgadal, 2017; Fahimi & Rahimi, 2015). This emerged idea raises the question on pattern of teaching language which requires an immediate realization that affective factors are equally responsible in influencing language assessment.

SA and cultural component

When implementing SA practices, learners' cultural background is not taken into account (Wong & Mak, 2018). In this regard, Matsuno (2007) found that her study participants assessed their peers more leniently than they assessed themselves. The reason is that in certain cultures such as Japanese, children are raised to give worth to the collective community and avoid emphasizing self-promotion. This finding suggests that the cultural factors affect the assessment process. Following their cultural norm, students may respond differently to SA practices. Therefore, incorporating the cultural norms into SA procedures can benefit students if considered carefully by educators.

SA and Age

Nielson (2011) argues that in his study, the age group of participants was not the same; i.e., from 19 to 25 and much older students. This can raise an argument against implementing similar SA method for students of different age groups. Similarly, Suzuki (2009) and Wong and Mak (2018) proposed taking age into consideration in the second language writing classroom. In comparison to university students, younger children who assume themselves less proficient in their L2 have a more difficult time detecting errors in texts (Wong & Mak, 2018).

SA and instrumentation

Mazloomi and Khabiri (2016) found in their study that 78% of learners gave preference to the checklists to scales and rubrics. Learners found checklists less threatening, less stressful and more convenient than teacher assessment and it also developed a sense of responsibility among them for their own language learning. However, on the contrary, some research indicates the

association of rubric use with improving the quality of students' writing quality. Baxa (2015), Ferry (2020), Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018), Weiss (2018), and Xu (2019) found that rubrics can define specific concepts clearly in respective aspect of learners' writing and influence the development of their writing by knowing the strength and weaknesses of their writing. In fact, recent research on rubrics in SA posits that assessment cannot be valid unless learners develop their understanding and awareness of the criteria against which their performance is likely to be evaluated. SA checklists reportedly enhance performance and warrant self-regulatory learning strategy use (Brown & Harris, 2013; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013; Taras, 2010).

It is interesting to note that research (Andrade, Wang, Du, & Akawi, 2009) proposes students' writing self-efficacy is likely to be responsive to rubric-referenced SA. Current literature predominantly reveals the potential role of rubrics in increasing students' self-efficacy resultantly leading to improvements in learning and achievement (Quinlan, 2006; Stiggins, 2001). Emphasizing the significance of rubrics in increasing the self-efficacy, Ross (2006) claimed that SA which focuses "student attention on particular aspects of their performance (e.g., the dimensions of the co-constructed rubric)" (p. 6) contributes to positive self-efficacy beliefs.

SA and exemplars

To close the gap between the learners and teachers' understanding regarding performance criteria, samples can facilitate SA by describing expectations in SA clearly, and by providing motivation to learners to "match or beat" the exemplars (Handley & Williams, 2011). In a study conducted by Brown (2005), the participants of study learned through reading the samples of writing of other participants that helped them improve their own work and these exemplars were found useful particularly in an independent learning program context where learners did not have access to teachers or learners. Stiggins (2001) considers that getting the clear understanding of their expectations, students will achieve more positive results. In this regard, samples will help in forming students' deeper understanding of their own writing products (Handley & Williams, 2011; Orsmond, Merry, & Callaghan, 2004).

SA and teacher feedback

The findings reported by Ratminingsih et al. (2018), Baxa (2015) and Xu (2019) indicate that a lack of teacher feedback affects the effectiveness of SA. The participants of these studies welcomed SA; however, the absence of the teacher's involvement made them less confident in conducting SA. Obtaining no feedback from teachers in the process of SA left participants

uneasy and they remained unclear about certain aspects which needed further explanation and clarification about the meaning of certain aspects.

Teachers' perceptions towards SA

Lending voice to teachers' perceptions regarding using SA in their class, Nielsen (2011), in his study, reported that teachers found it encouraging for learners and appreciated their own role in assisting learners in autonomous learning process. It indicates that teachers perceive sharing a control of assessment with students as a significant part of assessment. Supporting the findings of Nielsen's (2011) study, Bowman (2017) reported that engaging students in SA enhances student writing more than teacher feedback. Participant teachers also perceive that students could build some of the self-regulation which helped in determining their success in writing essays. This indicates the acceptance of SA in writing class as an alternative of teacher's feedback and indirectly negating a traditional authoritative role of teacher that has been assumed solely capable of improving writing of student. Recognizing the crucial role of SA as an alternative of feedback in writing development, it seems more appropriate to refer to Klimova (2011) citing the Harvard Study of Writing in 2004 that perceives feedback emergent as a hero and anti-hero with power to persuade students about 'could' or 'couldn't' of the work, contributing enough to sense of academic belonging or alienation of students.

The most noticeable aspect emerged in the study of Bowman (2017) is an encouraging perception of teachers regarding training students for SA. The training students for self-assessing their writing has been recognized impactful for students. Bowman provided an opportunity to students through evaluating anchor papers and rubrics to develop their mastery of the qualities that are expected in their writing through SA. In this regard, it was reported that teachers' perceptions regarding the spent time reviewing the rubric and anchor papers with students and working together with students can help in creating a shared understanding of aspects of strong writing and accurate use SA methods. However, Obeid (2017) argues that teachers perceive that the time provided to them is insufficient for large class size which interferes with the feasibility of working on the rubric with their students. Another point stressed by the study is that teachers perceive that they are not given due consideration while designing SA rubrics.

The Study of Butler and Lee (2010) found variance among participant teachers' perceptions towards SA. For one of them, SA functioned as feedback for her own instruction. Based on students' feedback regarding the SA activities, she made changes to many of the activities in original teachers' manual. The participant teacher perceived that when students learn that their evaluation proves impactful for instructional

practices, it motivates them to take SA seriously. Whereas another participant teacher perceived that stressing learning benefits of SA would not be enough therefore she emphasized the need of expanding SA practice widely in other classes other than English class.

Teachers' perceptions towards SA

Students' perceptions toward SA have a tendency to become more positive as they gain experience with it (Andrade & Du, 2007; Nimehchisalem et al., 2016). There are studies which are indicative of the positive perception of students towards SA, found to be based on their understanding the purpose of SA (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). In this regard, a few studies indicated that students perceived SA useful for developing an understanding of taking one's responsibility for learning, evaluation and revision for thinking critically and stimulating self-regulated learning (Wang, 2017). On the other hand, the negative perception of students is also indicated, based on their shallow understanding of SA. Regarding different types of writing feedback, Young (2000) revealed that students perceived SA more reliable if teachers are a part of it. They did not perceive peers as a part of SA encouragement. However, Suzuki (2009) found Peer involvement in assessment facilitating writing process. In process of assessing one's self, Novices and less able learners are likely to perceive them a better writer and over-estimate their performance (Young, 2000). The finding was also confirmed by Panadero et al. (2016). The misuse of SA by learners to grade themselves higher marks than they deserve is also reported by Dragemark-Oscarson (2009) who found a similar result. Garcia (2011) reported a repeated finding which is in consistency with studies of Young (2000) and Matsuno (2007). On the contrary, Young (2000), Sahragard and Mallahi (2014) indicate that some high achieving students also underestimated their performance. However, Weiss' study (2018) proposed some surprising detail that good students rated themselves low because they perceived their capabilities and limitations in a more realistic view. In addition, weak students did not display the competency of self-assessing themselves even provided with practice over time. Obeid (2017) raises an important concern of students who perceive SA confusing if it fails to convey to them clearly what they are expected to achieve in process of learning writing and how rubrics can help them in achieving it since the beginning. However, interestingly, students' concerns were related to their written exams. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) reported students' perception regarding effective SA is more likely possible when students know about their teacher's expectations. On the contrary, Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) and Andrade and Du (2007) reported feeling of frustration among students when expectations were not clearly communicated. In fact, unclear expectations caused frustration which

was reported rampant. If expectations are not articulated then there is '*a little or no formal SA*.

Discussion

Although conceptualization of writing SA has undergone an expansion which is evident through the review of related studies, the literature highlights a tension between the notion of SA and assessment based on teachers' expectations. SA has potential to improve learning whereas it has to be expanded in its scope from improvement in learning to improvement in teaching (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). In this respect, Dragemark-Oscarson (2009) raised a strong point that SA can change teaching. However, this change is possible when teachers are seen receptive to the feedback generated by students during the SA process about their understanding and misunderstandings in writing process.

There are several characteristics of SA which have been discussed in the studies; however, 'interaction' should be the main characteristic of SA involving peers, teachers, and other sources of information. In this regard, a three-stage pedagogy proposed by Liang (2014) can be taken into consideration which involves teacher modeling, guided peer assessment, and independent SA. Liang (2014) proposes that this model creates an ideal interaction between students and teachers, students and students, and the student and him/herself.

Referring to the concern raised by teacher participants to expand SA in all classes emerges an idea of integrating SA in the language learning syllabus. It can broadly be expected that integration will make the learning and teaching process in the writing classroom developmental and process-based. Inclusion of SA in writing is likely to transfer to future writing tasks (Fahimi & Rahimi, 2015).

The impact of transferring SA is not confined to the classroom. It is a lifelong skill that can be transferred to other areas (Dragemark-Oscarson, 2009). Teaching learners everything is not possible; therefore, for learning to continue outside the classroom, it is important to teach learners SA skills that can be transferred to other learning situations (Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2013). However, transfer of SA process to other courses is found inconsistent among students as they usually admit not self-assessing enough (Andrade & Du, 2007). It is likely that students may understand the concepts under SA; however, they are still unable to apply them to their own writing which may be a reason that students under/overestimate their own writing performance. To implement SA effectively, we should start from an early age and constantly be used as a means of assessment and learning. Constant

and early age practice makes students automated in self-assessing their writing.

There is consensus that SA is useful if it is implemented for formative than summative purposes (Nielsen, 2014). Eliminating grading makes it easier for students to self-assess their own writing. Matsuno (2009) views SA 'of limited utility' if implemented in formal assessment. Stressing students' towards a final grade in their SA can divert their attention from quality of their work and leave them in struggle to compromise on their focus (Andrade & Du, 2007). SA as a formative tool can be useful for elementary level students and can develop their autonomy.

In addition, Nielsen (2011) suggests that SA does not have to be an in-class activity but on the contrary, students should be given sufficient time to self-assess themselves at home in careful and structured manner. This may have life-changing advantage for weaker students. On the other hand, this will, certainly, require teachers' careful preparation and explanation of the SA exercise and their extensive support in class. In this regard, SA requires an equal involvement of the learners and teacher in the process of writing.

Our review also indicates that affective, cultural, and contextual components, among many others, greatly influence situating and administrating SA. A consideration of these interconnected components will change students' experience of the writing process from an isolated to an inclusive activity. In regard of addressing these concerns, SA checklists can play a significant role. They provide clear first-hand knowledge about these sensitive issues rarely addressed in SA writing. The review indicates the influence of SA on affective factors. In this regard, the literature stresses the role of SA checklists in increasing self-efficacy. However, there is little empirical evidence about relation between self-efficacy and use of SA checklists. This area needs further investigation.

Lack of prior experience and teacher feedback in SA necessitates the 'dialogue' between teachers and students to avoid discrepancies regarding the SA process. It also requires to take SA practice as a part of everyday practice to ensure the effectiveness of SA. However, in concurrence to Philippakos (2017), emphasizing teacher feedback should not restrict students in completion of the task. As a result, students may not appreciate teacher feedback and may rush through it. Rather giving opportunity to students to discuss and reflect on the process is likely to motivate students to remark on the steps they followed in the SA process, to discuss the challenges they face during SA and the need to be honest, clear and specific while giving comments (Philippakos, 2017).

The most important concern arises in training students for SA is that training students for different genres of writing may not be realistically

possible. However, training them to use their meta-cognitive skills, learning *how's* and *why's* of writing may prove SA useful in any genre of writing. Training teachers on SA in writing and giving feedback to learner is as important as training students on SA. It can influence the learners' perception of SA. Therefore, it has to be recognized as an important element of professional development courses for teachers.

SA has potential to change the relationship between teachers and students. In this regard, studies indicated the willingness of teachers to share their power with students. However, it may still be seen threatening to the authoritative and central space of teachers. It is also important to realize the significance of SA in this context. SA can create equal and friendly space through a dialogue between students and teachers which can facilitate interaction and result in effective instruction. This is another sensitive issue that needs more in-depth studies.

Based on the concern raised by Andrade and Du (2007), difference between SA based on the expectations of the teacher is arguable as students referred to SA in terms of their own expectations. However, this inconsistency between their own expectations and their teacher's expectations can be reduced by allowing students to suggest their own criteria for the preparation of the SA sheet. To resolve this confusion, it is important to consider the students' approach to writing.

Research encourages teachers to focus on the processes taking place in the student writer's mind (Zarei et al., 2017). Therefore, the use of SA tool should not be limited to the final stage of the writing process; rather, it should be developed in a way that it supports students throughout the process of writing while prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and evaluating. However, most of the available SA tools limit their focus on the final product, failing to take idea generation, organization, revision, and editing into consideration. Addressing this issue, Nimehchisalem, Kalajahi, Syamimi, Shameem, Ain Nadzima, Sabariah et al. (2018) developed a SA guide to support students at different stages of writing descriptions for their research outcome as a result of emphasizing the significance of SA checklists based on the specific features. This was the first genre-specific SA guide developed based on empirical data and validated by experts. To address this immediate need, attention should be given to developing a SA guides and checklists which address different genres.

Conclusion

It is important to understand that the SA requires to be an explicit part of the writing instruction. To achieve this goal, promoting SA as a behavior is a strong and inevitable need of time. To emphasize this claim, we turn back to

Boud (1999) who stresses that it cannot be expected that students will be an effective self-assessors unless Teachers do not model it in their own teaching practice instead of modeling SA activities in isolation.

If the above-said issues are addressed, it can be expected that the teachers and students will overcome SA challenges which they face collectively and SA can be part of everyday writing. In other words, as correctly noted by Boud (1999), SA will not be seen as a solution to 'an assessment problem' rather than' a learning problem'. Based on the current review, the following recommendations may be presented for future research in the area.

1. Regarding the inconsistency between teachers and students' expectation about SA, more research is needed to address the questions 'Where is the self in SA?', and 'Whose expectations matter?'
2. Future research should evaluate how helpful the information generated through assessment of students is for teachers in planning their instruction and how it can improve the teaching process.
3. SA as an interactive process among peers, teachers, and other sources of information is recommended to be studied throughout the writing process.
4. Literature indicates that SA has been studied as performance-oriented approach, however, more studies on development-oriented assessment are needed.
5. There is no empirical evidence on the relation between self-efficacy and SA, which could be taken into consideration in future research.
6. Research is required to explore if young learners over-estimate or under-estimate their language abilities and how to best implement SA among young learners.
7. More genre-specific SA guides and checklists should be developed for facilitating the writing process.

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Appendix A

Summary of previous studies

Author (Year), Focus	Methods (Design/ Setting, Sample, Instruments)	Findings	Limitations
Ferry (2020), Teaching Writing Through Self-Assessment and Analytical Scoring	Action Research/ Indonesia/ two classes of Higher level students/ Essays, SA, analytical scoring Rubrics, observation sheet, interview guide/	The findings indicated the improvement in students' writing skill with the implementation of self –assessment and analytical scoring.	Small sample size
Xu (2019), Scaffolding Students' SA of Their English Essays with Annotated Samples	Mixed-Methods Study/China/ 54 university students/ Rubric, annotated samples, interviews.	Findings showed the significantly stronger progress in EG in post-test. Results also suggested the effectiveness of annotation-based rubric-referenced SSA on understanding the task requirements, initiating self-regulatory behaviors of students, and improving their confidence in SA; however, students still wanted to receive teachers' assistance.	1. Collection of data through convenience sampling. 2. Medium level of Students' writing ability limiting the generalizability of findings. 3. Unable to adopt a stricter experimental design. 4. Only investigated perceptions of EG students regarding annotation-based rubric-referenced SSA and failed to elicit the CG's perceptions of rubric-referenced SSA without annotated samples.
Liu and Brantmeier (2019), "I know English": SA of foreign language reading and writing abilities among young Chinese learners of English	Empirical /China /106 Chinese learners (ages 12 to 14)/ a Writing Task (a picture-based writing prompt), and criterion-referenced SA Items.	Study found significant correlation between SA writing score and writing production. Findings also show that the tendency of young learners towards self-assessing their foreign language writing abilities	1. Study could not capture the accuracy of SA scores. 2. Limited to young language learners.

		accurately.	
Ratminingsih et al. (2018), SA: The Effect on Students' Independence and Writing Competence	Experimental/ Indonesia/ 425 seventh grade students/Questionnaire of students' independence and writing competence test, writing assignment, checklist and analytical scoring rubric	The results indicate that SA has an effect on the students' writing competence and independence.	1. Limited to junior secondary school students. 2. The study employed a post-test only control group design
Nimehchisalem et al. (2018), Developing an SA Guide for Undergraduates' Report writing	A Guide development project/ Malaysia/ 49 second year undergraduates/ An online descriptive writing task/ interviews/ in-house assessment	Developed a self-assessment tool to help ESL undergraduates in process of writing descriptions of tables and graphs.	The study was limited to a descriptive genre.
Weiss (2018), Student SA Re-Assessed	Experimental/ Greece/freshmen first semester college students/ 50 students(SA) and 37 students(TF), Academic Essay/ Analytical Rubrics	The findings did not endorse expectations with regard to reliability of SA	1. Restricted amount of comparable material obtained. 2. The high grades scorers completed all SA forms fully. Hence, this is a bias in the outcomes.
Elgadal (2017), Effect of SA on EFL students' writing	Experimental/ Libya/ year 4 university Students/40, SA Checklist post-study, feedback form, Questionnaire	Students' positive attitude toward SA in EFL writing.	1. Difficulty in collecting data 2. The low proficiency level of students deterring in analyzing their writing 3. Not piloting the research tools 4. Difficulty in getting access to the students
Obeid (2017), Second Language Writing and Assessment: Voices from Within the Saudi EFL Context	Quantitative/Saudi Arabia/university level twenty-two EFL teachers and 18 and 19 years old preparatory year program seventy-eight EFL students/twenty-item Likert scale questionnaires	EFL teachers and students indicated several concerns regarding using rubrics for assessing writing	1. Limited number of participants 2. Quantitative research method utilized.

Mazloomi and Khabiri (2016), The impact of SA on language learners' writing skill.	Quasi-experimental/ Iran/ 60 university students / expository genre essays/SA checklist and scales (or rubrics)	SA significantly improves the writing ability of learners by receiving appropriate feedback and training by the teachers.	Limited to expository genre
Wang (2017), Using rubrics in student SA: student perceptions in the English as a foreign language writing context.	Qualitative/Chinese/ 80 university students/ descriptive, narrative and expository writing/ A rubric, reflective journals and six case study informants' retrospective interviews	Results indicated the rubric was perceived useful by students in SA for fostering the Students' self-regulation in writing. The study recognized the factors which affect the rubric's effectiveness in SA.	1. Limited sample reduces its generalizability to other contexts. 2. The teacher/ researcher's identity is likely to hamper the students from being truthful about their opinions regarding rubric use.
Vasu, Ling, and Nimehchisalem (2016). Malaysian Tertiary Level ESL Students' Perceptions toward Teacher Feedback, Peer Feedback and SA in their Writing	cross-sectional design/ Malaysia/ Survey method /107 university-level students/ Questionnaire	The results indicated no significant difference between students' perceptions toward teacher feedback and SA and perceived them significantly more useful than peer feedback.	Future research should focus on obtaining qualitative data from the students through interviews and classroom observations.
Fahimi, and Rahimi (2015), On the Impact of SA Practice on Writing Skill	Mixed study/Iran/41 female intermediate level students/Essay writing/ Questionnaire/ Rubrics/ Interviews	Results showed students' writing skill improved gradually. Teachers and learners had positive attitude towards SA.	The limited number of students
Baxa (2015), SA and students' Narratives	A Qualitative /US/ Multi-Case Study/3 fifth-grade students/ writing conferences, audio-recorded interviews, teacher assessments, and notes and student written work, and SAs.	Students could talk about the learning targets and about the strengths and weaknesses of their writing and developed motivation to revise their writing.	1. The length of study 2. Participants' diversity
Sahragard and Mallahi (2014), Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners'	Quantitative/ Iran/ 30 Iranian intermediate EFL students / Language Learning Styles	The analysis of SA practice for writing revealed underestimating their writing ability by the	Small sample size

Language Learning Styles, Writing Proficiency and SA	Questionnaire, a writing SA checklist, grading rubric, and the students' written compositions.	more proficient writers whereas overestimation by the majority of the less proficient ones of different aspects of their writing ability.	
Andrade et al. (2010), Rubric-referenced SA and middle school students' writing.	Experimental/ 162 middle school students/ Model Essay and a rubric.	The results came up with findings that, criteria generation, reading a model, and use of a rubric for self-assessment can help middle school students in producing more effective writing.	1. The short treatment time 2. Use of single model paper 3. Non-random assignment to treatment or comparison groups 4. Teachers with different teaching styles 5. Different writing assignments
Butler and Lee (2010), The effects of SA among young EFL learners of English.	Intervention study and interviews/ South Korea/6th grade students/ 254/ Summative SA and unit-based SA	Study resulted in positive effects of SA on the performance of students.	Limited in its simple implementation of SA, used both pre-defined items with minimal systematic guidance for teachers and narrow approaches towards examining the effectiveness of SA
Matsuno (2007), Self-, peer-, and teacher-assessment in Japanese University EFL writing classrooms	Quantitative/Japan, Second year Students/91/ Essay evaluation sheet	Participants benefited through engaging in the self- and peer-assessments.	1. Small amount of overlap in the ratings 2. Rater leniency 3. Not adding qualitative research methods 4. Effect of general proficiency differences on self- and peer-assessments
Bowman (2017), Engaging students in the assessment process: a quantitative Study of peer- and SA	Quasi-Experimental/ United States/ High school students/ 323/Rubrics, Teacher's comments, Essays prompts	Self- and peer assessment process produce greater improvements than teacher feedback.	1. Maintaining the gains exhibited between the pre-test and post-test throughout the year 2. Lack of self-regulation skills in lower-achieving students necessary to post gains that rival those seen in this study 3. Possibility of influence of the information taught in the classes prior to the intervention

			on the gain score
Suzuki (2009), The Compatibility of L2 Learners' Assessment of Self- and Peer Revisions of Writing With Teachers' Assessment	Mixed/Japan/ second-year university students/ 24/Academic Essay	Peer revision helped students in making clearer decision about changing the text in their draft and gave students confidence in their revision.	1. The scale not validated 2. Small sample size 3. L2 or L1 educational as well as sociocultural background, gender, age L2 proficiency level not taken into account
Dragemark-Oscarson (2009), SA of Writing in Learning English as a Foreign Language	A multiple method (explorative, an intervention and descriptive case study)/ Sweden, 127 Secondary School Level Students, A SA, Questionnaire of Writing (SAQw), two SA Forms (SA1 and SA2), and a SA Questionnaire: National Test of English (SAWT), two sets of interviews and two written assignments	Positive attitude of teachers and students towards the integration of SA activities in EFL writing classroom.	1. Additional analyses of the achievement groups pass and pass with distinction helping to understand the restriction of range regarding grades used making difference to understand how students over- and underestimate their results 2. Student's motivation for self-assessing their written assignments 3. Positive aspects of the students' specific writing skills investigated 4. Further analyses of data regarding speaking skills would be helpful in further insight into the nature of SAs of EFL skills by adolescents
Brown (2005), SA of writing in independent language learning programs: The value of annotated samples.	Annotated samples of learner-produced texts were used, elucidating the criteria for judging performance and expected standards/ China/ 8 undergraduate students / Writing task (a report or a letter), Participant Questionnaire	The results show the potential of annotated samples approach for SA.	1. Small in scale. 2. Limited number of participants 3. Participants with a diverse range of language as well as cultural backgrounds.

	(Reflection on SA activity), Rubrics.		
Bruce (2000), Student SA: Encouraging active engagement in learning	Mixed/United Stated, 5 high school different elective subjects teachers 350 high school students, participants' interviews, a pre- and post-intervention, course surveys and sampling of attitudes linked to learning through INCLASS Inventory of Classroom Style and Skills	Findings revealed ownership students of their learning and development in their self-awareness.	1. Lack of empirical sense in qualities of taking more ownership 2. Possible influence of other sources on Students' motivation to learn such as Culture, family, school, and the student him/herself 3. Homogeneity of socioeconomic conditions of study population 4. Elective courses may indicate student interest and ownership through self-selection of the curriculum 5. Researcher bias by being involved in training the participating teachers 6. The pre- and post-intervention use of the INCLASS Inventory of Classroom Style and Skills unable to ascertain the causes of any significant differences or lack.
Nielsen (2011), A comparative study of the effectiveness of Peer evaluation and SA of writing instruction	Mixed methods/ United States, 120 English composition students, observation, videotaping, discussion, Interviews, Scoring rubrics	SA was found more effective for all levels of writers.	1. Impact of Teacher and student preparedness on method delivery and results 2. Motivation of students in participating in the revision exercises 3. Subjectivity in rating writing
Garcia (2011), SA activities in a second language (L2) writing class	Qualitative case study/ United States, Thirteen students, Observation, Interviews, SA activities	The participants' agreement upon the fact that SA checklists were very useful for them in terms of knowing their	1. Gender factor in identity negotiations in SA 2. Failure in validating research findings with the research participants 3. Eliminating the SA

		instructor expectations regarding a given assignment. But it did not provide them with a space of negotiating multiple identities or knowledge with their instructor.	questions by instructor and substituting it with others
Young (2000), Enhancing student writing by teaching SA strategies	Experimental/ United States, 304 fourth grade students, Rubrics, Teacher feedback, Prompts	The SA group performed significantly better than the comparison groups.	1. For directions, Participant Teachers' reliance on unaccustomed sources (a) the lesson plans provided by the researcher and, (b) the assistance of the college tutors 2. Not providing opportunities to students for using the Writer's Checklist, SA, and peer input in routine 3. Variations in teacher ability to follow instructions without specific training