

Exploring EFL Students' Perception on Self and Peer Assessment in Academic Writing

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 2025-12-21

Revised 2026-01-06

Accepted 2026-01-11

Keywords:

Academic Writing

EFL Students

Peer-assessment

Self-assessment

Students' Perception

ABSTRACT

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, academic writing remains a challenging skill for students, particularly in evaluating writing quality and monitoring learning progress. To address this issue, self-assessment and peer-assessment have been implemented as formative assessment strategies in writing instruction. This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of self- and peer-assessment in academic writing courses. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 18 Likert-scale items, administered to 100 third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that most students held positive perceptions of self- and peer-assessment. These strategies were perceived as helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses, enhancing awareness of the writing process, and improving writing quality. However, a few students expressed neutral perceptions, indicating a need for clearer guidelines and a more structured implementation. Overall, the results suggest that self-assessment and peer-assessment are effective approaches for developing EFL students' academic writing skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), mastering academic writing is often a difficult task for students. Many struggle to keep track of their progress and to identify areas in their writing that require improvement. This discrepancy between ideal writing proficiency and actual performance underscores the need for strategies that promote self-reflection and critical evaluation. One such strategy is self-assessment, in which students evaluate their own work based on clearly defined rubrics and criteria. Self-assessment fosters learner autonomy, accountability, and reflective thinking.

Research indicates that it can improve students' awareness of their writing processes and the accuracy of their evaluations. Taufik and Cahyono [1] reported that when self-assessment was combined with structured rubrics, students were able to systematically monitor their writing development, enhancing metacognitive awareness and promoting continuous improvement. Meanwhile, Bidna [2] found that using rubrics in self-assessment increased students' precision in evaluating their own work and encouraged higher engagement in the learning process. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that self-assessment not only supports progress monitoring but also strengthens students' ability to accurately evaluate their writing, both of which are essential for success in EFL academic writing.

In addition to self-assessment, peer-assessment has emerged as an effective strategy in academic writing courses. This method allows students to provide constructive feedback on their classmates' writing, fostering critical thinking and deepening their understanding of effective writing practices. Research shows that many EFL students view peer-assessment positively and believe it enhances their critical engagement with writing tasks, increasing awareness of writing quality and skills [3]. Moreover, structured peer feedback activities have been found to improve key aspects of written performance, such as grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and coherence, while also boosting students' confidence and awareness of their own writing challenges [4]. Engaging in peer-assessment also enables students to internalise the criteria for good academic writing, reflect on their own work, and develop a sense of responsibility for their learning, making it a valuable complement to self-assessment practices. Furthermore, the implementation of peer feedback has been reported to help students detect writing problems and improve their performance [5].

Although self-assessment and peer-assessment offer clear benefits, their effectiveness largely depends on how students perceive these practices. Perception refers to the way students interpret, understand, and respond to assessment activities. Positive perceptions can increase motivation and engagement, whereas negative perceptions may impede learning outcomes. According to Tanjung and Sari [6], students who held favourable views of self- and peer-assessment showed higher motivation and were more actively involved in writing tasks. Yan et al. [7] highlighted that students' perceptions are influenced by factors such as the clarity of assessment criteria, previous experience, and the guidance provided by instructors. In the Indonesian EFL context, Febyone et al. [8] observed that a lack of guidance or unfamiliarity with assessment criteria could lead to uncertainty and reduced confidence in conducting self- and peer-assessment effectively. Additional research supports the notion that self- and peer-assessment promote autonomy and engagement in learning across contexts (e.g., research on reflective journals and portfolios in EFL writing classes) [9]. Recognising these different perceptions is essential for evaluating whether self-assessment and peer-assessment can achieve their intended outcomes in practice.

Despite the benefits of self- and peer-assessment, most research in this field has concentrated on quantifiable outcomes, such as grade improvements or revision frequency, while paying less attention to students' perceptions. Understanding how students perceive

assessment is crucial because it influences how they engage with and respond to these practices. Hoinbala [10] highlighted that students often encounter difficulties in peer-assessment, including limited training and time constraints, which can reduce the effectiveness of the activity. Similarly, Tanjung and Sari [6] found that some students were uncertain about their responsibilities as peer reviewers, indicating a need for more precise guidance. In addition, Wijaya [11] noted that existing assessment tools do not fully capture the subtleties of students' perceptions, suggesting that more in-depth research is needed to understand students' experiences, attitudes, and engagement. Investigating these perceptions can help educators design self- and peer-assessment strategies that are more effective and responsive to students' learning needs.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by quantitatively describing students' perceptions of self-assessment and peer-assessment in academic writing courses at Tadulako University. By focusing on students' views, this research provides insights into how assessment methods are experienced in practice and how they might be improved to better support learning. The study is expected to contribute both theoretically, by enriching the understanding of assessment in EFL contexts, and practically, by offering guidance for instructors, students, and policymakers in higher education.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study used a descriptive quantitative research methodology to investigate how EFL students perceived the usage of peer and self-assessment in academic writing courses. This design was selected because it enabled the researcher to methodically explain current conditions using numerical data, including percentages and frequencies, without altering any variables. Descriptive quantitative research is commonly used to describe attitudes, opinions, and trends within a population as they naturally occur [12], [13]. In line with this view, Cresweel [14] asserts that statistical data can be used in quantitative research to describe attitudes, opinions, and trends within a given community. According to this perspective, the current study used a non-experimental methodology, concentrating on documenting students' perceptions as they happened organically in the classroom. A standardised questionnaire with pre-planned items was used to collect data, enabling measurement and statistical analysis of the responses. Students' perceptions of the use of self-assessment and peer-assessment in academic writing were clearly and objectively depicted through descriptive statistics.

Population and Sample

A population refers to individuals who share similar characteristics and serve as the focus of a study. According to Susanto et al. [15], a population includes individuals or objects that provide the primary data needed to answer research questions. The population of this study consisted of all third-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University during the academic year 2025–2026, totalling 248 students across seven parallel classes (A–G). From this population, a sample was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are chosen based on predetermined criteria [16]. As defined by Suriani et al. [17], a sample is a

subset of the population selected through a specific procedure to represent the population as a whole. Based on these criteria, 100 students from Classes A/H, B, C/J, E, and G were selected for their prior exposure to self- and peer-assessment in academic writing classes, making the sample appropriate for capturing students' perceptions.

Research Instrument

This study's primary tool was a questionnaire designed to assess students' opinions of their own and peers' assessments of their academic writing. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale and included 18 closed-ended statements, modified from [18]. Five statements on self-assessment, six statements on peer-assessment, and seven statements on students' overall opinions of both assessment techniques made up the three sections of the items. To make sure respondents knew how to fill out the questionnaire, clear instructions were given.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were collected in several stages. The researchers first developed a closed-ended questionnaire to measure students' opinions on peer and self-assessment in academic writing. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale and consisted of eighteen statements. Once prepared, the questionnaire was administered to the research sample. To complete the questionnaire, respondents were asked to select the option that best reflected their agreement with each statement. The completed questionnaires were collected for further analysis. The use of a closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire was considered appropriate because it enables responses to be easily coded and quantified, facilitating more efficient analysis in descriptive quantitative research [19].

Data Analysis

The first step in the data analysis was to examine how students answered each questionnaire item. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from Totally Disagree (1) to Totally Agree (5), was then used to code the replies. The frequency and percentage for each response group were then determined by processing the coded data using descriptive statistics. Gall [20] claims that percentages and frequencies provide a good picture of participants' responses. Lastly, the findings were tabulated to illustrate how students saw their own and their peers' evaluations of their academic writing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the collected data and the analysis results. The data are presented and interpreted based on students' responses obtained from the questionnaire.

3.1. Results

The questionnaire in this study consisted of 18 items designed to measure students' perceptions of self-assessment, peer-assessment, and the combined use of both methods in academic writing. Each item used a five-point Likert scale. The overall analysis was

conducted by summing all percentages in each response category and calculating the average per item.

Table 1. Overall Distribution of Students' Responses

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Totally Disagree	21	1%
Disagree	71	4%
Neutral	477	27%
Agree	774	43%
Totally Agree	457	25%
Total	1800	100%

As presented in Table 2, the highest proportion of responses fell into the “Agree” category (43%), indicating that most students viewed self-assessment and peer-assessment as beneficial for academic writing. This was followed by the “Neutral” category (27%) and “Totally Agree” (25%). In contrast, negative responses were minimal, with only 4% of students selecting “Disagree” and 1% choosing “Totally Disagree.” These results suggest that students generally view self-assessment and peer-assessment as beneficial components of academic writing instruction. The prevalence of positive responses indicates that students acknowledge the role of assessment activities in supporting their learning. However, the presence of neutral responses suggests that some students may lack confidence or sufficient familiarity with these assessment practices. This finding highlights the need for clearer guidance and more consistent implementation to help students better understand the purposes and advantages of self- and peer-assessment.

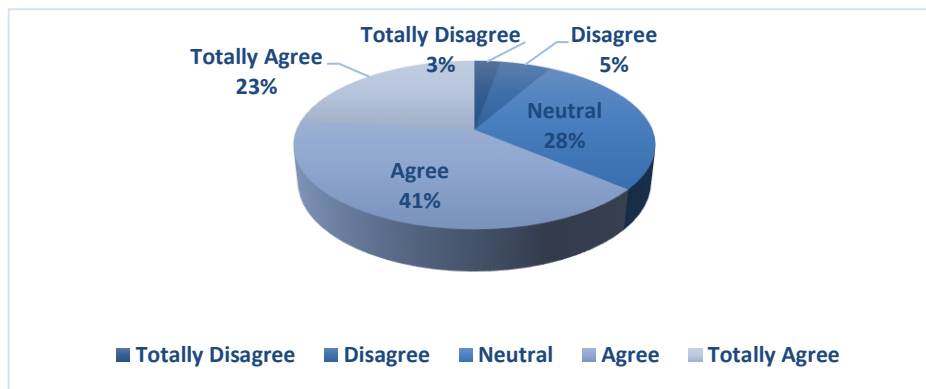


Figure 1. The Students' Perceptions of Self-Assessment

Table 2. The Students' Perception of Self-Assessment

No	Item	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
1	Through the process of self-assessment, I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of my own writing.	4	5	32	38	21
2	Self-assessment helps me correct mistakes in my writing.	2	3	22	45	28
3	Conducting self-assessment raises my awareness of the writing process.	4	5	29	45	17
4	I am objective when evaluating my own writing through self-assessment.	1	9	45	35	10
5	Technology (e.g., grammar checkers, language tools) helps me conduct self-assessment more effectively.	3	5	12	40	40

Based on Table 2 and Figure 1, most students selected the “Agree” category (41%), reflecting positive perceptions of self-assessment as a means of improving writing quality. This was followed by “Neutral” (28%) and “Totally Agree” (23%). Only a small proportion of respondents expressed negative views: 5% chose “Disagree” and 3% selected “Totally Disagree,” indicating that self-assessment was rarely perceived as ineffective. The results indicate that students perceive self-assessment as an effective strategy for identifying strengths and weaknesses, correcting errors, and enhancing awareness of the writing process. This suggests that self-assessment can foster reflective thinking and learner autonomy in academic writing. Nevertheless, the relatively high proportion of neutral responses, particularly on items related to objectivity, indicates that some students may experience difficulty in evaluating their own writing accurately. This finding implies that clearer assessment criteria and guided practice are needed to help students develop greater confidence and objectivity in conducting self-assessment.

Table 3. The Students’ Perception of Peer-Assessment

No	Item	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
6	Feedback I receive from peers during the peer-assessment process helps me recognise weaknesses in my writing.	0	5	27	41	27
7	I accept criticism given by my peers positively during peer assessment.	0	5	19	37	39
8	The process of peer-assessment makes me more careful when writing.	0	3	23	50	24
9	I trust the evaluation given by my peers in peer assessment.	2	2	38	43	15
10	Assessing my peers’ writing helps me improve my own writing skills.	0	5	23	52	20
11	Technology (e.g., comment features, online learning platforms) makes it easier to give and receive feedback from peers.	3	3	28	37	29

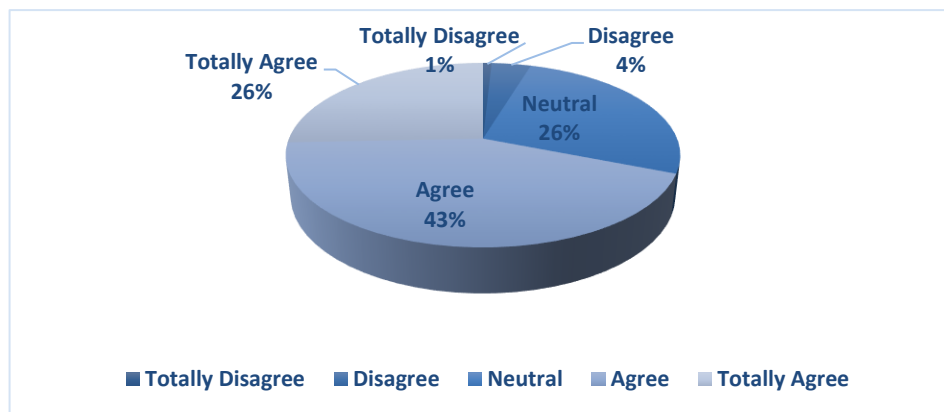


Figure 2. The Students’ Perception of Peer-Assessment

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, the largest proportion of responses fell into the “Agree” category (43%), indicating that students generally perceived peer-assessment as beneficial. This was followed by “Totally Agree” (26%), reflecting strong support for the practice. However, 26% of respondents selected “Neutral,” suggesting that some students were uncertain about the reliability of peer feedback or reluctant to assess their peers. Negative responses were minimal, with only 5% choosing “Disagree” and 1% selecting “Totally Disagree.” The findings indicate that peer assessment is perceived as beneficial for improving writing skills, promoting more careful writing, and encouraging

collaboration among students. Peer feedback appears to help students identify weaknesses in their writing and learn from their peers' work. However, the presence of neutral responses, particularly regarding trust in peer assessment, suggests that some students remain uncertain about the reliability of peer feedback. This underscores the importance of providing clear guidelines and structured feedback procedures to strengthen students' confidence in the peer-assessment process.

Table 4. Students' General Perceptions of The Assessment

No	Item	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
12	The combination of self and peer-assessment improves my writing skills.	0	4	19	40	37
13	I take more responsibility for my writing when involved in self and peer-assessment.	0	2	26	51	21
14	The process of self and peer-assessment makes me more appreciative of others' opinions.	1	1	20	47	31
15	Self and peer-assessment help me become a more reflective writer.	1	5	28	49	17
16	I feel my academic writing skills improve through the process of self and peer-assessment.	0	3	22	49	26
17	I hope self and peer-assessment will continue to be used in writing classes.	0	2	37	33	28
18	Integrating technology into self and peer-assessment makes the learning process more effective.	0	4	27	42	27

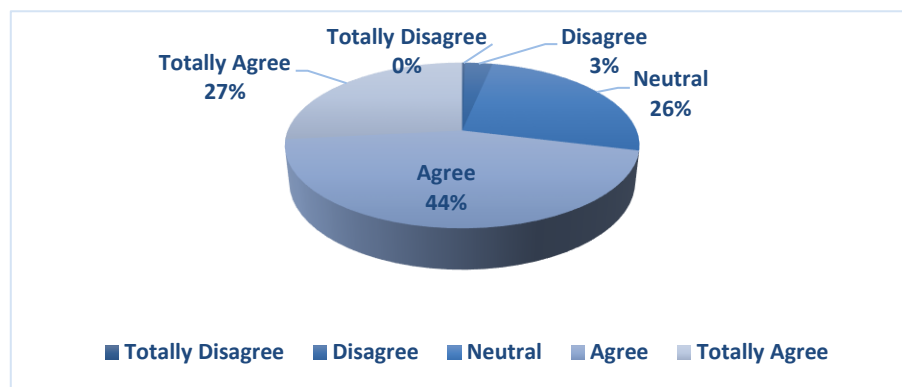


Figure 3. Students' General Perception of The Assessment

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 3, the highest proportion of responses was found in the “Agree” category (44%), followed by “Totally Agree” (27%), suggesting that most students perceived the combined use of self-assessment and peer-assessment as supportive of their learning. The “Neutral” responses accounted for 26%, indicating that some students were uncertain about the benefits of these assessment practices. Negative responses were minimal, with only 3% selecting “Disagree” and none choosing “Totally Disagree.” These results indicate that integrating self- and peer-assessment is perceived as beneficial for students’ academic writing development. Students tend to demonstrate greater responsibility for their writing, increased reflectiveness in evaluating their work, and heightened appreciation of others’ perspectives. In addition, the positive perception of technology integration suggests that digital tools may enhance the effectiveness of assessment practices. Overall, the findings show that combining self- and peer-assessment positively affects students’ engagement and learning in academic writing; however, ongoing guidance remains necessary to support students who remain uncertain about these practices.

3.2. Discussion

In this section, the discussion focuses on students’ perceptions of self- and peer-assessment in academic writing among third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. The discussion is organised around the key aspects investigated: students’ perceptions of self-assessment and peer-assessment, and their combined implementation in the writing classroom. The results showed that most students had favourable opinions of self-assessment in academic writing. Students felt that self-assessment prompted them to reflect on their writing performance and helped them identify their strengths and shortcomings. This result validates the claims made by Andrade and Du [21] that self-assessment encourages reflective learning and helps students analyse their work more skillfully. However, the existence of neutral answers suggested that some students had trouble evaluating their writing impartially. This could indicate that students lacked the necessary background knowledge or precise standards to assess their own work. Yan et al. [22] reported similar results, stating that students need systematic assistance and training to effectively execute self-assessment, particularly in academic writing contexts.

The findings also revealed a preponderance of favourable opinions on peer assessment. Students saw peer review as beneficial for understanding writing standards, honing their concepts, and raising the overall quality of their work. This result is consistent with Topping's [23] assertion that peer assessment fosters critical thinking, collaborative learning, and student involvement in the educational process. However, a number of students provided neutral opinions, suggesting that they were uncomfortable assessing their peers' work or had doubts about the validity of peer criticism. This result aligns with that of Asirah and Saputra [3], who found that students' comfort and involvement in peer-assessment activities are highly influenced by trust, familiarity, and confidence.

Additionally, the examination of students' overall opinions revealed that integrating peer and self-assessment created a helpful learning environment in the writing class. Students believed that these evaluation techniques improved their sense of accountability, introspection, and awareness of the writing process. This result validates the claims made by Carless and Boud [24] that the use of different formative assessment methodologies facilitates the development of learner autonomy and feedback literacy. By actively including students in their own and peers' assessments, the assessment process served as both an evaluation tool and a teaching method that aided writing growth.

Despite the overall positive perceptions, the consistent presence of neutral responses suggests that some students still lacked confidence or a clear understanding of how to apply self-assessment and peer-assessment effectively. Limited training, unclear instructions, or inconsistent implementation of assessment procedures may have influenced this issue. Carless and Boud [24] highlighted that explicit instruction and sustained practice are essential for developing students' ability to interpret criteria and provide meaningful feedback. Therefore, without adequate guidance, students may struggle to fully benefit from these assessment practices. Overall, the discussion shows that students' writing improvement, involvement, and awareness of academic writing processes were positively impacted by both peer and self-assessment. To ensure that all students can confidently and successfully participate in these assessment activities, the results also point to the need for more precise evaluation criteria, explicit instruction, and consistent execution. Furthermore, addressing the challenges encountered in implementing self-assessment and peer-assessment is crucial for enhancing students' writing competency and fostering a supportive learning environment [25].

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined third-semester students' perceptions in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University regarding the use of peer-assessment and self-assessment in academic writing. The results demonstrated that students generally held positive attitudes toward both evaluation techniques, as was predicted in the introduction. The majority of students agreed that self-assessment helped them see their writing's strengths and weaknesses, increased their awareness of the writing process, and motivated them to make more autonomous revisions. Students also expressed positive opinions about peer assessment. They indicated that peer input helped them identify mistakes, refine ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of academic writing.

Despite these positive outcomes, a number of students selected neutral responses, suggesting hesitation in evaluating peers' work or uncertainty regarding the reliability of peer feedback. This finding indicates that clearer guidelines and increased confidence-building activities are necessary to support students' full engagement in peer-assessment practices. Overall, the findings show that peer- and self-assessment enhance students' academic writing skills and promote responsible, reflective learning. Nevertheless, the presence of neutral responses suggests that some students still require additional practice, consistent implementation, and explicit instruction to fully understand and benefit from these assessment methods.

Based on these findings, further studies may explore students' experiences more deeply through interviews, observations, or reflective journals. Experimental research may also be conducted to examine the effects of training programs or digital tools on students' assessment skills and writing performance. Such studies may contribute to the development of more effective assessment practices in academic writing instruction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Wahyudin, S.Pd., M.Pd., and Andi Patmasari, S.Pd., M.Pd., for their guidance, direction, and valuable suggestions throughout the completion of this research. The author is also grateful to Dr. Darmawan, S.Pd., M.Phil., for his helpful feedback as the reviewer. Special appreciation is extended to the author's beloved family for their prayers, continuous support, and encouragement. Lastly, the author would like to thank friends who provided assistance, motivation, and support during the research process.

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