

## THE IMPACT OF HOMEWORK SELF-CHECKING ON LEARNER AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE WITH JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18612818>

**Abstract.** *This classroom-based study investigates the effects of systematic homework self-checking on learner autonomy, accuracy, and academic achievement in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, drawing a comparative perspective with self-checking practices commonly employed in Japanese education. The study was conducted at a private learning center in Uzbekistan and involved beginner and lower-intermediate EFL learners aged 10–13. Over one academic term, learners were trained to review and correct their homework using answer keys and guided correction criteria, with teacher feedback emphasizing the quality of self-correction rather than direct error marking. Data were collected through corrected homework samples, classroom observation, and progress test results. The findings indicate clear improvements in homework accuracy, a reduction in repeated grammatical and lexical errors, and increased learner responsibility and metacognitive awareness. These outcomes are consistent with principles observed in Japanese educational practice, where self-assessment and reflection are integral components of learning. The study suggests that homework self-checking is a low-cost, practical, and effective instructional strategy for promoting learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.*

**Keywords:** *homework self-checking; learner autonomy; EFL context; academic achievement; Japanese educational practices.*

### 1. Introduction

Homework plays a significant role in reinforcing classroom instruction and supporting the development of academic skills in EFL learning contexts. In many educational settings, however, homework is traditionally checked and corrected exclusively by teachers. While this approach provides direct feedback, it may limit learners' active engagement in evaluating their own learning and contribute to long-term dependence on teacher correction.

Learner-centered approaches to education emphasize autonomy, self-regulation, and reflective learning (Holec, 1981; Zimmerman, 2002). One instructional practice aligned with these principles is homework self-checking, in which learners review their completed tasks using answer keys or correction guidelines. Through this process, learners are encouraged to monitor their understanding, identify errors, and reflect on learning difficulties, thereby developing metacognitive awareness (Flavell, 1979).

Japanese educational practice offers a relevant comparative perspective, as self-checking and self-assessment are widely integrated into classroom routines from early schooling.

Learners are systematically trained to correct their own work, reflect on mistakes, and assume responsibility for learning outcomes (OECD, 2018). These practices contribute to high levels of learner independence and academic discipline.

Despite the pedagogical potential of homework self-checking, limited research has explored its classroom-based implementation in EFL contexts, particularly in comparison with international practices such as those found in Japan. This study therefore examines the impact of systematic homework self-checking on learner autonomy and academic achievement in an Uzbek EFL context.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does homework self-checking affect learners' accuracy and academic performance?
2. What impact does homework self-checking have on learner autonomy and responsibility?
3. To what extent do the observed outcomes reflect practices found in Japanese education?

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employed a small-scale, classroom-based qualitative research design. A systematic homework self-checking intervention was implemented over one academic term, allowing the observation of academic and behavioral changes within a natural instructional setting.

### **2.2 Participants**

The participants were EFL learners studying at a private learning center in Uzbekistan.

The group consisted of learners aged 10–13 at beginner and lower-intermediate proficiency levels.

Participants were selected through convenience sampling, as the researcher was also the classroom teacher. All learners shared a similar educational background and studied English as a foreign language.

### **2.3 Procedure**

Learners completed homework assignments three to four times per week, including grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension tasks. After completing each assignment, learners were provided with answer keys or model responses. They were instructed to compare their answers, correct mistakes using a different color, and identify areas of difficulty. Teacher feedback focused on the quality and accuracy of learners' self-corrections rather than on direct error marking.

### **2.4 Materials**

The materials consisted of grammar and vocabulary exercises from the coursebook, reading comprehension tasks, and corresponding answer keys. No supplementary materials were introduced, ensuring that the approach remained practical and easily replicable in similar classroom contexts.

### **2.5 Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected through corrected homework samples, classroom observation, and progress test results. The analysis was descriptive, focusing on observable changes in learner accuracy, behavior, and responsibility over the course of the intervention.

## **3. Results**

The implementation of systematic homework self-checking was associated with clear improvements in learners' homework accuracy and overall academic performance.

Average homework accuracy increased from 68% prior to the intervention to 84% by the end of the academic term. In addition, the repetition of similar grammatical and lexical errors decreased over time, indicating increased learner awareness and monitoring of mistakes.

Learners demonstrated greater independence in correcting errors and showed increased responsibility in completing and submitting homework on time. Classroom observations revealed that learners began asking more specific and focused clarification questions, reflecting enhanced metacognitive awareness and reduced reliance on teacher correction.

Table 1 Changes in Learner Accuracy and Autonomy Before and After the Homework Self-Checking Intervention

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Before Intervention</b>	<b>After Intervention</b>	<b>Observed Change</b>
<b>Average homework accuracy (%)</b>	68%	84%	+16%
<b>Repetition of similar errors</b>	Frequent	Occasional	Noticeable decrease
<b>Independent error correction</b>	Low	High	Significant increase
<b>Clarification questions</b>	Rare and general	Frequent and specific	Improved metacognitive awareness
<b>Dependence on teacher correction</b>	High	Moderate-low	Reduced dependency
<b>Timely homework submission</b>	Inconsistent	Consistent	Improved responsibility

These patterns reflect practices commonly observed in Japanese educational contexts, where self-checking and learner responsibility are integral components of classroom instruction.

**4. Discussion**

The findings indicate that systematic homework self-checking contributed not only to improved accuracy but also to the development of learner autonomy and responsibility.

Engaging learners in the correction process encouraged reflection, reduced repeated errors, and fostered greater awareness of individual learning difficulties.

These outcomes align with theories of metacognition and self-regulated learning (Flavell, 1979; Zimmerman, 2002) and closely resemble practices observed in Japanese education, where learners are expected to take ownership of their learning progress. In EFL contexts with limited classroom exposure, homework self-checking extends learning beyond the classroom and supports the development of independent learning skills.

The study has limitations. The small sample size and the absence of a control group limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the qualitative nature of the analysis restricts statistical interpretation.

Future research could involve larger participant groups, control conditions, and quantitative measures to further examine the effectiveness of homework self-checking in EFL settings.

## 5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that systematic homework self-checking positively influences learner accuracy, responsibility, and autonomy in EFL classrooms. The findings are consistent with effective practices observed in Japanese education and suggest that self-checking is a transferable instructional strategy.

Homework self-checking represents a low-cost, easily implementable approach suitable for real classroom contexts. The study offers practical implications for EFL teachers seeking to promote learner autonomy and improve academic outcomes.

## Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the administration of the learning center. Learners' participation was voluntary, and all data were anonymized. The study posed no physical or psychological risk to participants.

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