



Trends and patterns in self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context: A bibliometric study^{*}

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Lee, Je-Young. 2025. Trends and patterns in self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context: A bibliometric study. *Linguistic Research* 42(Special Edition): 179-212. This study investigates research trends in self-assessment within the Korean EFL context through a bibliometric analysis of 117 journal articles indexed in the Korean Citation Index (KCI) from 1998 to 2024. Using VOSviewer 1.6.19, performance analysis was conducted to identify publication trends, prolific authors, institutions, and influential journals, while science mapping techniques, including co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, and co-citation analyses, were employed to reveal collaboration patterns, thematic structures, and foundational works. Results indicate steady growth in publications, with contributions distributed across multiple journals rather than dominated by a few sources. Co-authorship analysis revealed limited cross-institutional collaboration, while co-occurrence analysis of author keywords identified seven thematic clusters, including writing assessment, formative assessment, learner autonomy, and listening skills. Citation and co-citation analyses highlighted key publications and influential theoretical foundations, with both domestic and international studies shaping the field. However, a notable proportion of highly co-cited works were published before the 2000s and originated outside Korea, reflecting the enduring influence of early international scholarship. The findings provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure of Korean EFL self-assessment research and suggest directions for future studies, including expanding collaboration networks, incorporating recent global perspectives, and addressing underexplored skill areas. (Jeonju University)

Keywords self-assessment, language assessment, research trend, bibliometric analysis, performance analysis, science mapping

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1. Introduction

Self-assessment has emerged as a vital component of language education, fostering learner autonomy, enhancing metacognitive awareness, and providing opportunities for formative evaluation. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly in South Korea, self-assessment has been implemented to promote reflective learning and support individualized feedback (Butler and Lee 2010; Kim 2019). By enabling learners to evaluate their own skills, self-assessment not only complements teacher-led evaluation but also encourages active learner participation in the assessment process, contributing to the development of both linguistic competence and learner confidence.

Research in this area spans diverse domains, including speaking and writing assessment (Lee and Kim 2009; Matsuno 2009), affective factors such as motivation and self-efficacy (Butler and Lee 2010), and classroom-based formative practices (Blanche 1988). However, despite the accumulated body of work, existing studies have predominantly taken the form of small-scale empirical investigations or theoretical discussions, limiting the ability to capture broader intellectual patterns and thematic developments.

Bibliometric analysis provides a systematic, quantitative approach to mapping research landscapes by identifying influential works, authors, collaboration networks, and thematic trends (Moral-Muñoz et al. 2020). Science mapping techniques, such as co-authorship, citation, and co-citation analyses, offer valuable insights into the intellectual structure and evolution of a field. While bibliometric methods have been widely applied in various domains of applied linguistics (Sun and Lan 2023), their application to self-assessment in the Korean EFL context remains scarce, and no prior studies have systematically employed science mapping approaches to examine research trends in Korean English education.

Given South Korea's sustained interest in integrating self-assessment into its national English curriculum, especially since the 2009 and 2015 curriculum revisions, there is a need to systematically examine how this area has developed over time. By analyzing 117 KCI-indexed publications from 1998 to 2025, this study seeks to uncover publication trends, identify key contributors and influential works, and map thematic foci within the field. Through this approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Korean EFL self-assessment landscape, highlight existing gaps, and suggest directions for future inquiry.

2. Literature review

2.1 Bibliometric analysis

In recent years, the importance of research synthesis has grown significantly across a wide range of academic disciplines. As the body of scholarly literature continues to expand at an unprecedented pace, researchers have increasingly relied on synthesis methodologies such as meta-analysis and systematic literature review (SLR) to consolidate empirical findings and build cumulative knowledge. These methods facilitate the identification of research trends, the evaluation of evidence strength, and the detection of gaps within the existing literature (Vuogan and Li 2023).

Among these synthesis approaches, bibliometric analysis has emerged as a distinct yet complementary method. Unlike SLRs, which involve a qualitative and often labor-intensive process of manually selecting, evaluating, and summarizing studies to address specific research questions, bibliometric analysis adopts a quantitative lens. While SLRs are particularly effective for in-depth examinations of narrowly defined topics, they can be time-consuming and prone to subjective bias (Shurovi et al. 2025). Meta-analysis, by contrast, statistically aggregates data from multiple empirical studies to assess overall effect sizes and explore generalizable trends across studies (Rosenthal and DiMatteo 2001; Lee 2025).

Bibliometric analysis complements these methods by offering a broader, macro-level perspective of a research field. It applies statistical and computational techniques to large sets of bibliographic data—such as citation counts, co-authorship patterns, keyword co-occurrences, and journal metrics—to generate a structured overview of scholarly landscapes. The primary goal is to map the intellectual structure and social dynamics of a field, allowing for the identification of influential publications, prolific authors, institutional collaborations, and evolving research themes (Kumar and Sahoo 2025). Moreover, bibliometric approaches are particularly useful for exploring longitudinal trends and assessing the diffusion of concepts or methodologies across disciplines (Maral 2025).

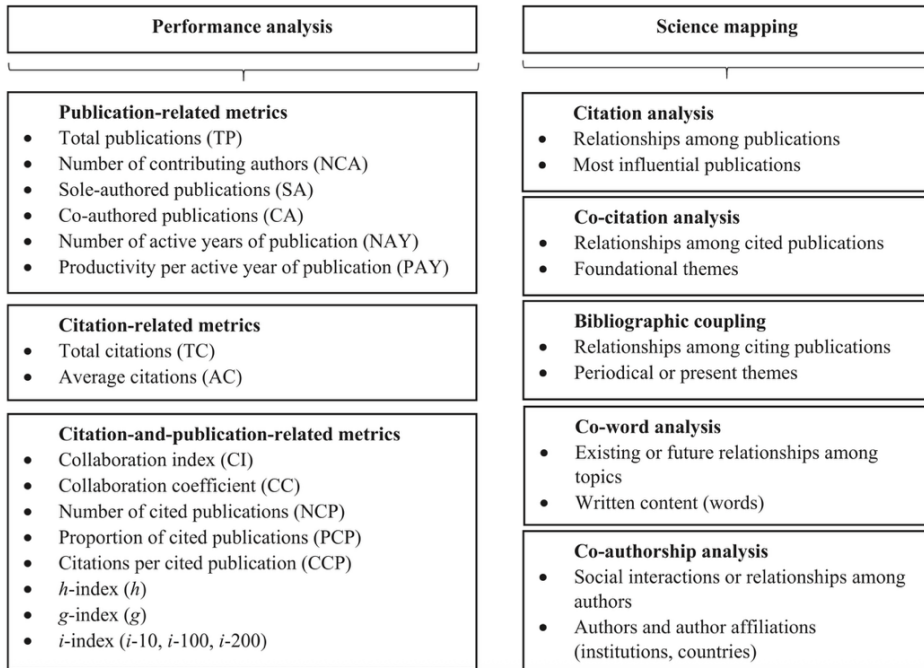


Figure 1. Types of bibliometric analysis (Adapted from Donthu et al. 2021: 288)

Techniques in bibliometric analysis are typically divided into two broad categories: performance analysis and science mapping (see Figure 1). Performance analysis focuses on evaluating the productivity and scholarly impact of various research constituents, including individual authors, institutions, countries, and journals (Donthu et al. 2021; Seo and Han 2023). Because it involves descriptive metrics such as publication counts and citation frequencies, performance analysis is commonly incorporated into literature reviews, even when science mapping techniques are not employed.

Science mapping, in contrast, examines the relationships and interactions among research constituents (Passas 2024). It seeks to uncover the underlying intellectual and conceptual structure of a field by analyzing how authors, articles, and topics are interlinked. This approach includes a variety of techniques such as citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-word analysis, and co-authorship analysis. When combined with network visualization tools, these techniques not only provide a visual representation of research networks but also help uncover emerging research fronts and interdisciplinary linkages within a domain (Donthu et al. 2021;

Chen et al. 2023).

Taken together, these bibliometric methods offer researchers a powerful set of tools for systematically evaluating the structure, development, and future directions of a given research field, thereby enhancing the transparency and rigor of literature synthesis efforts.

2.2 Previous studies

This section first reviews previous studies that have employed bibliometric analysis in the field of English language education, and then turns to examine research syntheses, such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses, focused on self-assessment in both international and South Korean context.

Bibliometric analysis has gained considerable traction across various academic fields, including medicine (Yang et al. 2023), computer science (Zurita et al. 2020), and education (Bozdoğan 2020). This trend reflects a broader methodological shift toward synthesizing large bodies of literature to understand research landscapes, intellectual structures, and emerging themes. Such methods not only provide a macroscopic view of academic developments but also help identify knowledge gaps and guide future scholarly inquiry. The field of English language education and applied linguistics is no exception. Since the mid-2010s, bibliometric approaches have been increasingly adopted to investigate macro-level trends in English language teaching and learning. Notably, Arik's (2015) early study laid the groundwork for this line of inquiry, followed by more recent and focused contributions such as Zhang (2019), Chen and Abdullah (2024), Seraj et al. (2024), and Zhong (2025). These studies have explored a range of themes - from second language acquisition to L2 reading instruction and self-regulated learning - demonstrating the growing relevance of bibliometric analysis for uncovering patterns and guiding future research in the English education domain.

Although bibliometric analysis has been increasingly applied in English education, only a limited number of studies have appeared in Korean academic journals. Among them, Fu et al. (2021), Kwon (2025), and Seo and Han (2023) represent important contributions, each employing distinct bibliometric techniques. Fu et al. (2021) conducted a co-citation analysis of 2,174 English-language documents drawn from

Scopus and Web of Science to explore the evolution of corpus-based discourse studies between 1995 and 2019. Their analysis revealed a thematic shift from grammatical pattern analysis to interdisciplinary topics such as pragmatics, identity, and media discourse. Keyword analysis further identified emerging research areas like social media and legal discourse. Kwon (2025) focused on the intersection of digital humanities and English language, literature, and education, analyzing 602 international journal articles indexed in Web of Science from 2005 to 2024. Using VOSviewer, the study mapped publication trends, co-authorship networks, institutional and national contributions, and keyword co-occurrence clusters, revealing a transition from corpus linguistics and academic writing to themes such as artificial intelligence, informal digital learning, and learner psychology. Both studies demonstrate the utility of bibliometric analysis in visualizing research development and identifying thematic evolution over time. However, although these two studies were published in Korean academic journals, they exclusively analyzed English-language research articles indexed in international databases such as Scopus and Web of Science; therefore, their relevance to understanding domestic research trends in Korea is limited.

In contrast, Seo and Han (2023) examined 2,383 articles on elementary English education published between 1994 and 2023, using bibliometric data extracted from the KCI. This study holds particular significance in that it focused specifically on research published in academic journals within South Korea. Their analysis centered on performance indicators, including prolific authors, affiliated institutions, and frequently co-occurring keywords. The study offered a valuable overview of the domestic research landscape, highlighting key contributors and institutional hubs in the field. However, it did not incorporate reference-based science mapping techniques such as co-citation or bibliographic coupling, limiting its capacity to reveal the intellectual structure of the field.

In addition to bibliometric approaches, several research syntheses have investigated self-assessment in international and Korean EFL context using a variety of methodologies.

At the international level, recent syntheses portray self-assessment in ELT as moving beyond a narrow validity debate toward a more integrated pedagogy-assessment paradigm. Hosseini and Nimehchisalem (2021) screened 106 studies and closely analyzed 18 ELT-focused articles, showing that self-assessment has been used both as a performance-oriented testing tool and a development-oriented

learning process, with a growing “hybrid” view that aligns assessment of learning with assessment for/as learning. Reported enablers include explicit training, rubric-guided criteria, repeated self-assessment cycles, and judicious use of technology (e.g., learner recordings) to support reflection and feed-forward; persistent challenges center on accuracy (over/under-estimation), proficiency effects, and the need to scaffold younger or lower-proficiency learners.

Meta-analytic evidence from Ross (1998) also indicates that self-assessment shows moderate-to-strong criterion relations overall (median $r = .63$), with skill-specific patterns (listening ($= .65$) and reading ($= .61$) exceeding speaking ($= .55$) and writing ($= .52$)) and substantial variability tied to task familiarity and learners’ experiences. These findings suggest self-assessment is most dependable when descriptors match what learners have actually practiced, and they caution that method facets in self-reports make self-assessment better suited to low-stakes placement/diagnosis than high-stakes decisions unless triangulated with external evidence.

In South Korean context, Lee (2024) conducted a systematic literature review of 52 journal articles published between 1998 and June 2023 to examine how self-assessment has been applied and studied in the discipline of English education. The study categorized articles by curriculum revision periods and analyzed patterns in participants, assessment dimensions, research methodologies, and topical focus. The findings indicated a growing emphasis on formative writing assessment, the use of explicit rubrics, and explanatory mixed-methods research, with learners’ perceptions and consistency as dominant research themes. Complementing this, Lee and Hwang (2024) adopted a data-driven approach by applying Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling to 98 journal articles from the same timeframe. Their analysis identified five core research themes, including writing-centered evaluation, skill-specific self-assessment, and the role of teachers, highlighting the evolving functions of self-assessment in fostering engagement, metacognition, and learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. Together, these two studies offer both qualitative and quantitative syntheses of how self-assessment has been conceptualized and researched over time.

Furthermore, meta-analytic techniques have been used to assess the effectiveness of self-assessment. Hong (2018) synthesized findings from 29 studies across multiple disciplines, including English, published between 1993 and 2014. Her analysis revealed a moderate positive effect of self-assessment on academic achievement (mean effect size $= 0.42$), with variations based on school level, subject area, assessment method,

and the presence of feedback. Similarly, Lee and Lee (2023) analyzed 30 studies focused specifically on English education in Korea, reporting a moderate overall effect size ($g = .558$) for both self- and peer-assessment on students' cognitive development and self-directed learning. Subgroup analyses showed stronger effects at higher educational levels, indicating the importance of learners' proficiency and cognitive maturity in optimizing self-assessment outcomes. These meta-analyses underscore the pedagogical significance of self-assessment and its potential to improve learner outcomes in EFL contexts.

Despite these valuable contributions, none of the aforementioned studies employed bibliometric analysis to examine the overall structure and development of self-assessment research in the Korean context. Existing bibliometric studies in English education in Korea, such as Seo and Han (2023), have focused primarily on performance indicators, such as prolific authors and institutions, without incorporating reference-based science mapping techniques like co-citation or bibliographic coupling. Moreover, no prior research has attempted to visualize the citation network or intellectual linkages of self-assessment studies conducted in Korea. This gap calls for a study that combines both performance analysis and science mapping to offer a holistic, evidence-based understanding of how self-assessment has evolved within Korean EFL scholarship. Such an endeavor would not only illuminate the trajectory of research in this area but also inform future directions for theory, pedagogy, and policy.

3. Method

3.1 Data collection

The data collection for this bibliometric analysis was conducted in two stages. To examine the overall trends without temporal bias, no restrictions were placed on the publication year of the studies. Both English- and Korean-language articles were included in the search.

The initial data collection was conducted in July 2025 using two major and comprehensive Korean academic databases: KCI and RISS (Research Information Sharing Service; riss.kr). These databases were selected because they provide the most

extensive coverage of peer-reviewed academic publications in South Korea across various disciplines. The search strings used were as follows: for English-language searches, “English” OR “L2” OR “EFL” OR “ESL” AND “self-assessment” OR “self assessment” OR “self-evaluation” OR “self evaluation”; and for Korean-language searches, “영어” AND “자기평가” OR “자가평가.” After removing duplicate entries, titles, abstracts, and keywords were screened to exclude studies unrelated to English self-assessment. As a result, 102 relevant studies were selected for analysis.

To ensure completeness, a second round of data collection was conducted using backward citation searching (Briscoe et al. 2019). Specifically, the reference lists of the initially collected studies were manually reviewed to identify additional works on self-assessment in English language education that may have been missed during the first search. This process led to the identification and inclusion of 15 more studies. In total, 117 studies on English self-assessment were finalized for bibliometric analysis.

3.2 Procedure and instruments

The bibliographic data for the studies selected in this analysis were primarily organized by exporting metadata from the KCI into an Excel file. As KCI provides bibliographic information only for publications from 2004 onward (Korea Citation Index 2025), earlier studies published before 2004 were manually processed. Full-text versions of these articles were retrieved from RISS or journal websites, and the relevant bibliographic information was extracted and recorded manually.

To ensure consistency and accuracy in the bibliometric analysis, all metadata were standardized to English. For references presented in Korean, English metadata provided by the KCI and, where necessary, journal websites were retrieved and entered. This approach prevented equivalent terms (e.g., “자기평가” and “self-assessment”) from being treated as distinct entries. The bibliographic fields analyzed comprised nine key elements: AU (Author[s]), CI (Corporate Author/Author Affiliation), TI (Title), SO (Source), DE (Author Keywords), AB (Abstract), PY (Publication Year), CR (Cited References), and TC (Times Cited).

Following data collection, a data cleaning process was conducted with a particular focus on disambiguation. Disambiguation refers to the process of resolving ambiguity by distinguishing between items that appear similar but represent different entities,

or by recognizing when different representations actually refer to the same entity (Tekles and Bornmann 2020). This step is essential for ensuring the validity of the analysis. Disambiguation was applied in three primary areas: author names, institutional affiliations, and keywords or terms (Purnell 2022).

To address inconsistencies in author names and affiliations, all items were first alphabetically sorted. Then, using the original articles and the KCI author database, ambiguous cases were reviewed - such as instances where different individuals (e.g., Kim Jihyeon and Kim Jisook) were listed under the same abbreviated form (Kim J.) - and corrected accordingly. For keywords, a thesaurus file was created and applied in VOSviewer to merge semantically related terms expressed differently, such as “self-evaluation” and “self-assessment” or “2015 revised version of national curriculum” and “2015 revised English curriculum”. Through this process, a total of 70 entries were added to the thesaurus file.

With regard to the CR (Cited References) field, only journal articles were included in the dataset. Other types of sources, such as books, conference proceedings, master’s theses, and doctoral dissertations, were excluded, even if they appeared in the reference lists of the analyzed papers. Non-journal references were excluded to maintain consistency and focus on peer-reviewed scholarly communication, which is central to network-based bibliometric analysis.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer version 1.6.19, a software tool designed for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. VOSviewer enables the mapping of relationships among publications, researchers, or journals based on co-citation, co-authorship, and bibliographic coupling (van Eck & Waltman 2010). It also supports the creation of co-occurrence networks from terms such as author keywords, allowing researchers to identify thematic patterns within a corpus of scientific literature (Moral-Muñoz et al. 2020).

3.3 Analysis

The bibliometric analysis in this study was designed to examine both the productivity and impact of research constituents and the intellectual and thematic structure of self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context. To achieve this, two complementary approaches were employed: performance analysis and science mapping

(Moral-Muñoz et al. 2020; Donthu et al. 2021).

Performance analysis focuses on evaluating the output and influence of different research constituents, such as authors, institutions, journals, and documents. In this study, performance indicators included the number of publications and citation counts for individual authors, institutional affiliations, and journals. Both full counting and fractional counting methods were applied to provide a more nuanced understanding of author and institutional productivity. Citation counts were based on the Times Cited (TC) field from the KCI.

Science mapping examines the relationships among research constituents to reveal the intellectual structure, collaboration patterns, and thematic development of the field. In this study, four primary science mapping techniques were applied using VOSviewer 1.6.19. Co-authorship analysis was used to identify collaborative networks and assess the degree of interconnection between researchers. Co-occurrence analysis of author keywords, supported by a thesaurus file for term unification, was conducted to detect major research themes and their interrelationships. Citation analysis traced direct citation links among documents to determine clusters of publications with strong intellectual connections, while co-citation analysis of cited authors and cited documents was performed to map foundational works frequently cited together, thereby revealing the underlying theoretical and methodological influences on Korean EFL self-assessment research.

For network analyses, thresholds were applied to focus on the most relevant and frequently occurring items—for example, a minimum number of occurrences for keywords and a minimum citation count for cited references. The CR (Cited References) field was restricted to journal articles to ensure comparability and focus on peer-reviewed scholarly communication. The resulting networks were visualized and interpreted to identify clusters of related items, which were then analyzed for thematic, methodological, or historical significance.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Production of scholarly articles over time

To identify temporal patterns in self-assessment research within the Korean EFL

context, publication years of the 117 included journal articles were analyzed (see Figure 2). The earliest studies appeared in 1998, and research output remained sparse through the early 2000s, with fewer than five articles published annually until 2009. From 2010 onward, the number of publications gradually increased, marking the beginning of sustained scholarly attention to the topic.

A notable surge occurred between 2015 and 2019, during which 40 articles - over one-third of the total - were published. Compared with the 2010-2014 period (22 articles; 4.4 per year), output in 2015-2019 nearly doubled to 8.0 per year. This change aligns temporally with the 2015 Revised English Curriculum, which emphasized learner autonomy and process-oriented, formative assessment and encouraged the use of self- and peer-assessment in classroom evaluation (Ministry of Education 2015). In practical terms, the policy likely operated through several channels, such as teacher training directives, school-level assessment guidelines, and textbook revision cycles that supplied rubrics, checklists, and performance, task formats conducive to self-assessment. Given typical adoption-to-publication lags of roughly one to three years (implementation in classrooms, data collection, review), the clustering of outputs from 2016-2019 is consistent with policy diffusion into research practice. Although the curriculum is not posited as the sole cause, given simultaneous worldwide moves toward formative assessment and educational technologies, the magnitude and timing of the post-2015 rise suggest that the curriculum served as a key enabling condition for the growth.

Research activity remained relatively high from 2020 to 2024, with an average of 7.8 articles published per year during this period, suggesting that interest in self-assessment has been maintained into the present. As of mid-2025, two articles had already been published, indicating continued engagement with the topic.

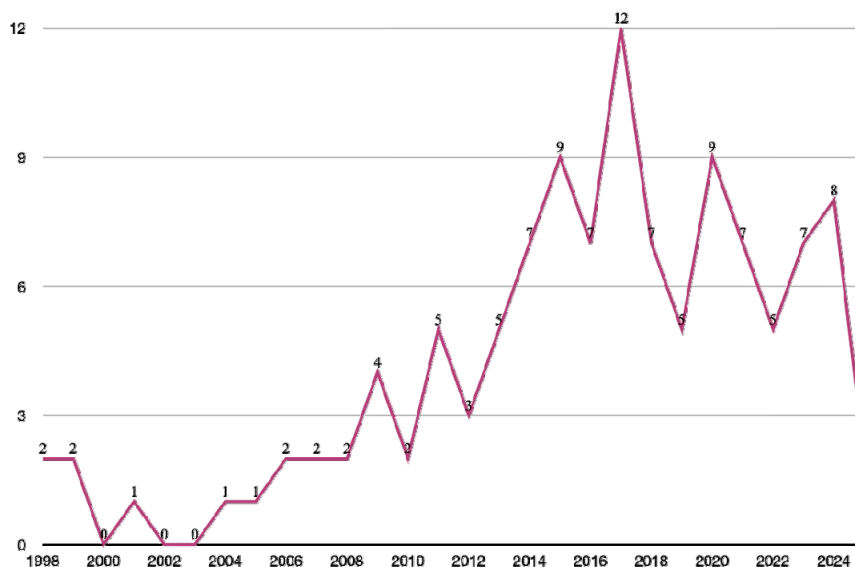


Figure 2. Evolution of number of articles published between 2003 and 2022

These publication trends highlight several important developments in the trajectory of self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context. First, the sharp rise in output after 2015 likely reflects increased policy and pedagogical emphasis on formative assessment and learner autonomy in national curriculum reforms (Ministry of Education 2015). Second, the sustained publication levels from 2020 onward, despite the disruptions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, suggest that self-assessment has become an established research topic, embedded within broader conversations around digital learning, feedback practices, and alternative assessment (Chung and Choi 2021). Finally, the modest number of studies prior to 2010 underscores that self-assessment was once a relatively underexplored area in Korean English education research. The rapid growth thereafter signals a maturing field with increasing scholarly and practical interest. This temporal analysis provides the foundation for further bibliometric mapping of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of self-assessment studies in subsequent sections.

4.2 Productive authors and institutions

Table 1 presents the 20 most productive authors based on both full and fractional counting methods. H. Lee emerges as the most prolific contributor, with a total of 6 publications (full counting) and a fractional contribution of 4, indicating consistent and substantial involvement across multiple studies. K.-H. Pyo follows closely with 5 publications and a fractional count of 4, suggesting a similar level of engagement in collaborative research. J.-Y. Lee ranks third with 4 full-count publications, but a notably lower fractional score (1.89), which implies frequent co-authorship with multiple collaborators. Authors such as K.-R. Kim (3, 3) and Y.-G. Cho (2, 2) show identical scores in both full and fractional counts, reflecting more equal or sole authorship roles.

The analysis of productive authors sheds light on the key contributors shaping the research landscape on self-assessment in English education in Korea. The dual use of full and fractional counting provides valuable insight into not just how often authors publish, but also how substantially they contribute to collaborative efforts. For example, authors like H. Lee and K.-H. Pyo demonstrate both high productivity and strong participation across studies, making them central figures in the field.

Furthermore, the presence of many authors with similar publication counts (e.g., several with two publications) reflects a relatively broad base of contributors to this field, rather than dominance by a small number of researchers. This may indicate that research on self-assessment in English education is being explored by a diverse scholarly community, though a few core authors maintain a leading presence.

Table 1. Most productive authors

	Name	Full Counting	Fractional Counting		Name	Full Counting	Fractional Counting
1	H. Lee	6	4	-	B.R. Kim	2	2
2	K.-H. Pyo	5	4	-	E.H. Park	2	2
3	J.-Y. Lee	4	1.89	-	E. Song	2	2
4	K.-R. Kim	3	3	14	S.Y. Jang	2	1.5
5	Y.-G. Cho	2	2	-	J.-S. Kim	2	1.5
-	C.M. Chong	2	2	-	J. Lee	2	1.5
-	S.J. Chung	2	2	-	J.K. Lee	2	1.5
-	J. Jeon	2	2	-	S. Lee	2	1.5
-	M.A. Jung	2	2	19	H.-J. Jung	2	1
-	H.D. Kang	2	2	20	J.-R. Kim	2	.67

Table 2 presents the most productive institutions based on both full counting and fractional counting methods. These counts reflect the number of publications affiliated with each institution, either through simple frequency (full count) or adjusted contribution based on co-authorship (fractional count).

Dankook University ranks highest in terms of fractional counting (7.5) and second in full counting (9), indicating not only frequent involvement in relevant studies but also a high level of contribution to co-authored publications. Chung-Ang University leads in full counting (10) and closely follows in fractional count (6), suggesting its researchers have produced a significant number of papers, though often with shared authorship.

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Korea National University of Education also demonstrate strong engagement in the field, with fractional counts of 5.5 and 4, respectively, and each contributing 8 full-count publications. Ewha Womans University follows with 5 fractional and 6 full-count publications, indicating sustained scholarly output.

A number of national universities of education - including Seoul, Busan, Cheongju, Gongju, and Korea National University of Education - also appear frequently, reflecting their central role in teacher training and English education research

This institutional analysis highlights the key academic hubs for self-assessment research in English education within South Korea. Institutions such as Dankook University, Chung-Ang University, and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies have emerged as consistent contributors, producing both a high volume of work and substantial contributions to the scholarly dialogue.

Table 2. Most productive institutions of affiliation

	Institution	Full Counting	Fractional Counting		Institution	Full Counting	Fractional Counting
1	Chung-Ang Univ.	10	6	9	Jeonju Univ.	4	1.89
2	Dankook Univ.	9	7.5	10	Gongju Nat'l Univ. of Education	3	2.5
3	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	8	5.5	-	Kyung Hee Univ.	3	2.5
4	Korea Nat'l Univ. of Education	8	4	12	Pukyong Nat'l Univ.	3	1.6
5	Ewha Womans Univ.	6	5	-	Jeonbuk Nat'l Univ.	3	1.5

6	Seoul Nat'l Univ. of Education	5	3	14	Seoul Nat'l Univ.	3	1
7	Seoul Women's Univ.	4	4	15	Cheongju Nat'l Univ. of Education	3	.9
8	Busan Nat'l Univ. of Education	4	2.5				

The prominence of national universities of education underscores the practical relevance of self-assessment research to teacher training and English education at the primary level. These institutions' involvement suggests that self-assessment is not only a theoretical construct but also a pedagogical tool being actively explored in Korean pre-service teacher education and classroom implementation.

4.3 Influential journals and articles

Table 3 presents the most frequently appearing journals in the dataset, along with their five-year KCI impact factors. Journal of Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction recorded the highest number of publications ($N = 8$, 6.84%), with a relatively high five-year KCI IF of 1.60. While this journal covers a broad range of subject areas beyond English education, its prominence in the dataset reflects the interdisciplinary nature of self-assessment research, particularly where it intersects with general pedagogy and learner-centered instructional design.

Among journals specializing in English education, English Language & Literature Teaching ($N = 7$, KCI IF = 0.68), English Teaching ($N = 7$, KCI IF = 0.54), and Foreign Languages Education ($N = 7$, KCI IF = 0.72) emerged as leading publication venues. Additionally, English Language Assessment ($N = 5$, KCI IF = 1.16), English Language Teaching ($N = 5$, KCI IF = 0.55), and Studies in English Education ($N = 5$, KCI IF = 0.80) were also influential sources. These journals are central to the dissemination of research on assessment practices, teacher education, and skill-specific pedagogies within the Korean EFL context.

In the English and American literature domain, English21 ($N = 4$, KCI IF = 0.31) and The Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature ($N = 4$, KCI IF = 0.37) were notable contributors. While primarily literature-focused, these journals also publish articles in English education and linguistics, which explains their inclusion in the dataset.

Overall, the distribution of publications across journal types underscores the cross-disciplinary character of self-assessment research in Korea. Notably, the results indicate that no single journal exerts overwhelming influence in this field. Instead, publications are relatively evenly distributed across a variety of journals, suggesting that self-assessment research is of interest to a broad academic audience and is integrated into multiple scholarly conversations.

Table 3. Most productive journals

	Publication Titles	Record Count	%	KCI IF (5 years)
1	Journal of Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction	8	6.84	1.6
2	English Language & Literature Teaching	7	5.98	.68
-	English Teaching	7	5.98	.54
-	Foreign Languages Education	7	5.98	.72
5	English Language Assessment	5	4.27	1.16
-	English Language Teaching	5	4.27	.55
-	Studies in English Education	5	4.27	.80
8	English21	4	3.42	.31
-	The Journal of Foreign Studies	4	3.42	.24
-	The Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature	4	3.42	.37

Analysis of the most cited articles, based on KCI citations up to 2024, reveals several thematic concentrations within self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context.

One prominent strand is research that consolidates existing findings to build a stronger empirical and methodological foundation. Hong (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of self-assessment studies, offering statistical evidence of its effectiveness and identifying moderating variables. This work provides a reference point for both researchers and practitioners, reinforcing the role of meta-analytic synthesis in advancing evidence-based practice. Notably, synthesis articles such as meta-analyses tend to accrue higher citation impact than single empirical studies, as they aggregate and evaluate cumulative evidence, offer methodological templates, and set research agendas - thereby serving as widely cited touchstones for subsequent work (Patsopoulos et al. 2005).

Another cluster of influential studies focuses on designing and applying structured assessment models. Park and Chung (2017) developed a procedure-based assessment

model for listening and speaking in elementary English classes, addressing the need for skill-specific frameworks. Similarly, Ahn et al. (2005) proposed a differentiated EFL textbook model that integrates self-assessment to promote learner autonomy, linking assessment innovation with curriculum design.

A substantial body of work examines how self-assessment can be embedded in classroom practice to enhance learner autonomy and language proficiency. Kang and Lee (2006) explored its use in a 5th-grade English classroom to foster autonomous learning, while Lee and Kim (2009) compared self-, peer-, and teacher assessments in oral proficiency evaluation, offering practical insights into multi-source assessment approaches. Kim and Gong (2007) investigated rubric-based speaking assessment involving student participation, emphasizing active learner engagement in the evaluation process.

Several studies highlight the role of teacher beliefs and learner affective variables in the success of self-assessment. Park and Lee (2015) surveyed elementary teachers' perceptions and classroom practices, shedding light on the importance of teacher readiness and implementation strategies. Jung (2011) examined the relationship between communication apprehension and affective factors in English learning, illustrating how self-assessment intersects with psychological dimensions of language acquisition.

Table 4. Most cited articles

Authors	Article Title	Source Title	Number of Citation
Hong S.-Y. (2018)	The effect of self-assessment: A meta-analysis	Journal of Educational Evaluation	35
Park J.-H. & Chung H.S. (2017)	Developing procedure-based assessment model of English and its application to elementary school students' learning of listening and speaking	Teacher Education Research	22
Lee H.K. & Kim J.-H. (2009)	Classroom assessment of English oral proficiency: Focusing on self-, peer-, and teacher assessment	English Language Teaching	20
Kang S. & Lee J. (2006)	Utilizing self-assessment to improve autonomy in a 5th grade English classroom	The Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature	16
Ahn B.-Y. et al. (2005)	Designing a secondary school textbook model for differentiated EFL learning and learner autonomy	English Teaching	15

Jung M.A. (2011)	The relationship between university students' communication apprehension in English and affective factors in learning English	The Journal of Studies in Language	13
Kim Y.-C. & Gong J.-S. (2007)	A Study on the Effect of Using Rubric through Students' Participation on Speaking Ability	Studies in English Education	13
Park C. & Lee J.-J. (2015)	Elementary teacher's perception and practice in classroom on student self-assessment	Journal of Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction	12

Taken together, these thematic groupings suggest that influential research on self-assessment in the Korean EFL context is not concentrated in a single area but spans from high-level methodological syntheses to classroom-based applications, curricular design, and teacher/learner factors. This thematic diversity indicates that self-assessment is a multifaceted construct that engages multiple stakeholders (researchers, teachers, and learners) and is applied across various instructional contexts and skill domains.

4.4 Collaboration ties between authors

Figure 3 illustrates the co-authorship network of authors who have published at least two documents in the dataset. The network reveals two distinct clusters of scholarly collaboration. The first cluster includes Lee J.-Y., Kim J.-R., and Lee S., indicating a pattern of frequent collaboration among these researchers (e.g., Jeon et al. 2018; Lee and Lee 2023). The second cluster consists of Jung H.-J. and Lee J.K., who have also co-authored Jung and Lee (2020).

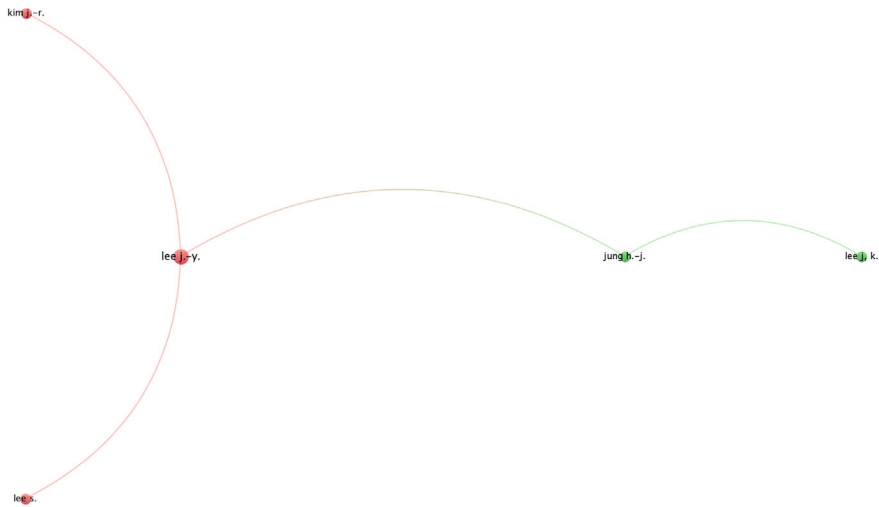


Figure 3. Co-authorship analysis at author level

The relatively small number of links and clusters suggests that co-authorship networks in this field are still emerging and somewhat fragmented. Nonetheless, the existence of visible clusters and bridging authors indicates that some collaborative structures are beginning to take shape, which may support further interdisciplinary or inter-institutional research in the future.

4.5 Research themes based on co-occurrence of author keywords

To explore the topical diversity of self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context, a co-occurrence analysis of author keywords was conducted using VOSviewer. A minimum threshold of three keyword occurrences was applied, and a thesaurus file was used to unify synonymous terms. The analysis yielded 34 keywords distributed across seven clusters, each reflecting a distinct thematic focus within the field (see Figure 4).

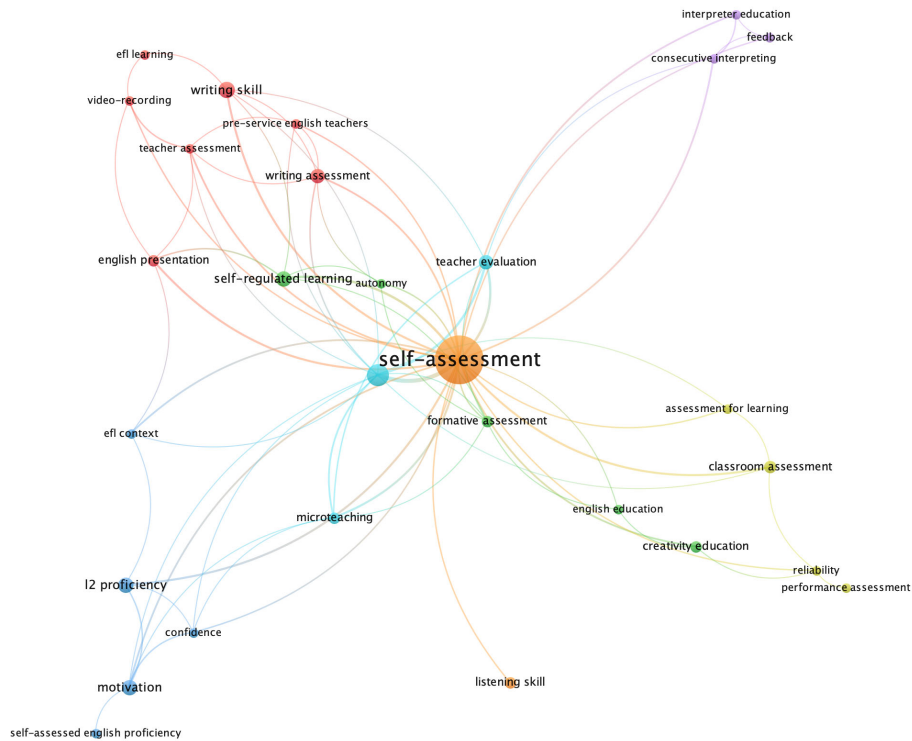


Figure 4. Co-occurrence of author keywords

Cluster 1 centers on writing-related self-assessment and includes terms such as EFL learning, English presentation, pre-service English teacher, teacher assessment, video-recording, writing assessment, and writing skill. This cluster highlights the role of self-assessment in developing writing proficiency and presentation skills, particularly among pre-service teachers.

Cluster 2 emphasizes psychological and pedagogical dimensions of learner development, with keywords such as autonomy, creativity education, English education, formative assessment, and self-regulated learning. These terms point to a growing research interest in self-directed learning and formative practices that support learner agency.

Cluster 3 includes confidence, EFL context, L2 proficiency, motivation, and self-assessed English proficiency. The focus here lies in examining the affective and proficiency-related variables associated with learners' self-perception and confidence in English performance.

Cluster 4 features keywords such as assessment for learning, classroom assessment, performance assessment, and reliability, suggesting a research strand investigating the methodological robustness and classroom applicability of self-assessment practices.

Cluster 5, consisting of consecutive interpreting, feedback, and interpreter education, represents a smaller but notable niche focused on self-assessment in interpreting and translation education, where performance-based evaluation plays a critical role.

Cluster 6 includes microteaching, peer-assessment, and teacher evaluation, pointing to teacher training and professional development contexts in which peer- and self-assessment are used for reflective practice.

Cluster 7 is formed by listening skills and self-assessment, reflecting interest in applying self-assessment to listening comprehension. Listening is historically difficult to assess formatively due to the invisibility of comprehension processes (Buck 2001). In addition, traditional listening tests often rely on multiple-choice formats, which measure outcomes rather than provide diagnostic feedback aligned with formative assessment (Fulcher and Davidson 2007). This cluster suggests growing efforts to address these challenges through learner reflection and self-monitoring.

When compared to Lee and Hwang's (2024) Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)-based topic modeling, which identified five major themes, the current co-occurrence-based clustering shows a high degree of thematic overlap. Both analyses underscore the significance of writing, metacognitive engagement, learner affect, and the teacher's role. However, the co-occurrence analysis offers greater specificity, particularly in distinguishing domains such as interpreting education (Cluster 5) and teacher education contexts like microteaching (Cluster 6), which were less prominent in the topic modeling results. It shows that topic modeling and co-occurrence analysis are complementary rather than interchangeable methods (Klarin 2024). Topic modeling employs probabilistic algorithms to detect latent themes in co-occurring words across large datasets (Blei et al. 2003), while co-occurrence analysis identifies explicit relationships among terms based on their joint appearance in documents.

4.6 Citation networks

Citation analysis examines how scholarly works are interconnected through references, enabling the identification of influential publications and intellectual linkages within

a research field (Donthu et al. 2021; Klarin 2024). In VOSviewer, citation networks visualize these relationships by mapping publications that cite one another, where clusters represent groups of works with stronger interconnections. Such analysis helps to reveal both the thematic organization of a field and the publications that play pivotal roles in shaping its development (Nightingale and Marshall 2012).

The citation analysis revealed 11 distinct clusters of interconnected publications, each reflecting thematic or methodological linkages based on citation patterns (Figure 5). Of these, the analysis focused on the five major clusters.

Cluster 1 includes works such as Kang and Lee (2006), which explored self-assessment as a means to enhance learner autonomy in elementary English classrooms, as well as Pyo (2014, 2015) and Jung and Lee (2017), which contributed studies on assessment practices focusing on the integration of self-assessment into classroom-based formative evaluation. This cluster is anchored in classroom-based interventions and formative assessment practices that incorporate learner participation in evaluation. The persistence of citations to these works in later publications indicates their foundational role in shaping practical models of self-assessment for learners.

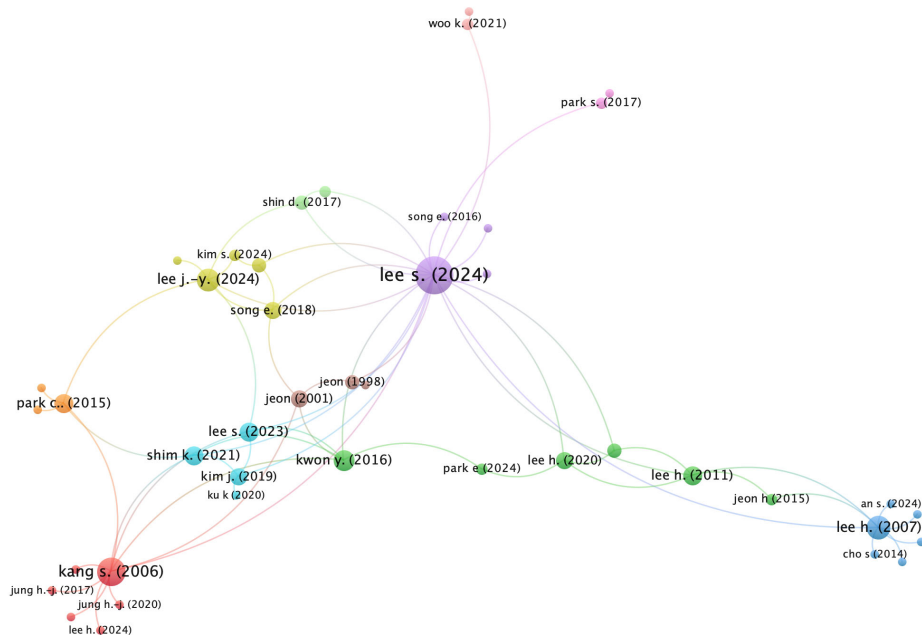


Figure 5. Citation analysis

Cluster 2 is composed of studies like Kwon and Lee (2016) and Park (2024), which address the development of assessment items and frameworks aligned with curriculum standards. Thematically, this group reflects an emphasis on aligning self-assessment tools with institutional objectives and ensuring validity and reliability in assessment design. The frequent mutual citation patterns suggest a tightly connected body of work focused on technical and policy-related dimensions of assessment in Korean EFL contexts.

Cluster 3 gathers works such as Lee (2007), and more recent contributions by An (2024) and Jang and Park (2021). This cluster centers on integrating self-assessment into specific skill domains, particularly speaking and listening, and embedding reflective practices into instructional materials. The combination of older and newer works points to a sustained interest in skill-specific applications over time.

Cluster 4 features publications like Song (2018), which explore the intersection of self-assessment, learner autonomy, and affective factors such as motivation and confidence. The network structure suggests that these works often serve as bridges between pedagogical studies and those focused on learner psychology, indicating an integrative research trajectory.

Cluster 5 contains studies such as Lee (2024) and Song (2016) that are conceptually linked through the use of technology and multimedia resources (e.g., video-recording) to support self-assessment practices. Notably, Lee (2024) is a systematic literature review of self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context, which synthesizes findings across diverse strands. Its position at the center of the network, with multiple links to otherwise separate clusters, underscores its function as a key publication that consolidates fragmented evidence and serves as a comprehensive reference point for subsequent research.

Overall, the citation network shows a distributed structure, with multiple moderately sized clusters rather than a single dominant group. This pattern reflects the diversity of self-assessment research in the Korean EFL context-spanning foundational theory, classroom practice, skill-specific applications, teacher education, and technology integration. The presence of a highly connected review study such as Lee (2024) demonstrates how synthesis-oriented publications can act as intellectual hubs, linking disparate research communities and guiding the field toward more integrated and cumulative knowledge building.

4.7 Co-citation networks

Co-citation analysis examines the frequency with which two documents are cited together in later works, under the assumption that co-cited documents share conceptual or methodological similarities. By mapping these co-citation patterns, it is possible to identify the intellectual structure of a research field and to reveal how foundational studies are interconnected (Donthu et al. 2021). In this study, the co-citation analysis, based on a minimum of five citations per reference, identified four distinct clusters of frequently co-cited works (Figure 6).

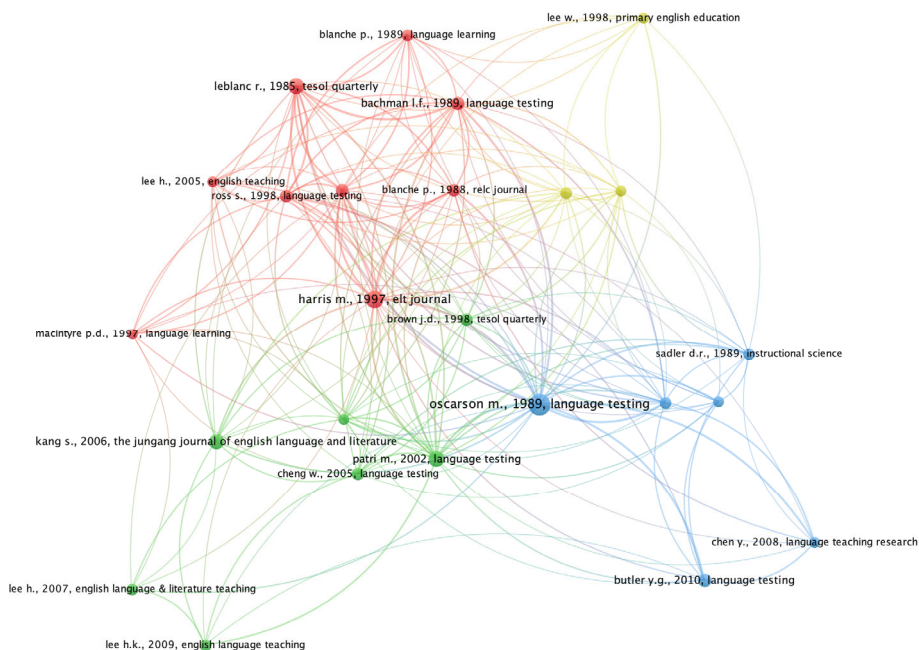


Figure 6. Co-citation analysis

Cluster 1 is anchored by seminal works in construct validation and the psychometric properties of self-assessment. Key references include Bachman and Palmer (1989), Blanche (1988), and Ross (1998), which address the reliability, validity, and experiential factors affecting self-ratings of language proficiency. Other highly co-cited works, such as Harris (1997) and LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985), explore

the use of self-assessment as placement instruments and in formal educational settings. Studies like MacIntyre et al. (1997) highlight the influence of affective variables, particularly language anxiety, on self-ratings, while Peirce et al. (1993) examine individual differences such as locus of control. The inclusion of Lee (2005), which validated self- and peer-ratings in a Korean EFL essay-writing context, reflects the integration of these international perspectives into local research. Collectively, this cluster underpins much of the methodological and validity-oriented discussion in subsequent Korean self-assessment studies.

Cluster 2 centers on alternative and collaborative assessment methods, integrating self-, peer-, and teacher evaluation. Foundational work by Brown and Hudson (1998) frames alternative assessment approaches in language education, while studies by Cheng and Warren (2005) and Patri (2002) investigate the dynamics of self- and peer assessment in various language skills. Korean contributions, such as Kang and Lee (2006) and Lee and Kim (2009), adapt these concepts to local classrooms, exploring how multi-source assessment can enhance learner autonomy, engagement, and oral proficiency development. The prominence of both domestic and international studies in this cluster reflects the reciprocal influence between global assessment frameworks and context-specific pedagogical innovations in Korea.

Cluster 3 is characterized by works focusing on self-assessment in learning processes and formative contexts. Blue (1994), Oscarson (1989), and Boud and Falchikov (1989) provide early discussions on the feasibility, applications, and accuracy of self-assessment in language and higher education. More recent studies, such as Butler and Lee (2010) and Chen (2008), examine self-assessment among young learners and through longitudinal case studies, respectively. Sadler (1989) contributes a theoretical perspective on formative assessment and instructional design, reinforcing the pedagogical role of self-assessment beyond summative purposes. This cluster reflects a synthesis of conceptual and empirical work on self-assessment as a metacognitive and formative tool, with implications for learner autonomy and instructional scaffolding.

Cluster 4 brings together works on self-assessment in broader educational systems and motivation. Dochy et al. (1999) provide a comprehensive review of self-, peer-, and co-assessment practices in higher education, while McMillan and Hearn (2008) emphasize the role of self-assessment in fostering motivation and achievement. Lee (1998) represents an early Korean contribution, proposing a working model for

primary English language testing that incorporates self-assessment principles. This cluster reflects a macro-level perspective, linking self-assessment to systemic assessment reform, motivation theory, and policy-level implementation.

Overall, the co-citation network demonstrates that Korean EFL self-assessment research is deeply embedded in, and informed by, an established international knowledge base. Notably, a large proportion of the most frequently co-cited works were published before the 2000s, indicating that early theoretical and methodological contributions continue to exert significant influence on current research. Furthermore, the dominance of internationally published works over domestic studies suggests that Korean self-assessment research has been strongly shaped by global scholarship, with relatively few local studies achieving comparable citation prominence in the co-citation network. This pattern underscores the importance of both engaging with foundational international literature and fostering high-impact domestic research.

5. Conclusion and implications

This study conducted a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 117 journal articles on self-assessment in the Korean EFL context, integrating both performance analysis and science mapping to examine the productivity, influence, collaboration patterns, and thematic evolution of the field. The findings reveal that while self-assessment research in Korea has expanded significantly since the mid-2010s, particularly following the 2015 Revised National Curriculum, it remains a relatively young but rapidly maturing area of inquiry.

Performance analysis identified a diverse pool of contributing authors and institutions, with no single researcher or organization overwhelmingly dominating the field. This diversity suggests a broad scholarly interest in self-assessment, though a small group of core authors and national universities of education have played a central role in shaping the research landscape. The institutional prominence of teacher-training universities also indicates the strong pedagogical relevance of self-assessment in pre-service teacher education.

Science mapping illuminated the thematic breadth of Korean EFL self-assessment research. Co-occurrence analysis of author keywords revealed clusters emphasizing writing proficiency, metacognitive engagement, learner affect, classroom assessment

design, and specialized domains such as interpreting education and microteaching. Citation and co-citation analyses demonstrated that the field is anchored in internationally recognized theoretical and methodological works published before the 2000s, with relatively fewer domestic publications achieving high citation impact. This indicates that Korean scholarship has drawn heavily from global literature while still developing its own intellectual core.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the dataset was limited to publications indexed in the KCI. Consequently, research conducted in Korea but published in international journals was excluded, which may have resulted in an incomplete representation of the field. Second, the total of 117 articles, while sufficient for mapping broad trends, is relatively modest compared to bibliometric analyses in other disciplines, which often draw on several hundred or even thousands of publications to ensure robust and stable network structures (Zupic & Čater 2014; Donthu et al. 2021).

These findings carry several implications. First, the diversity of thematic clusters highlights opportunities for cross-pollination between subfields, such as integrating insights from teacher education research into skill-specific self-assessment studies. Second, the persistent reliance on international foundational works underscores the need to strengthen the visibility and impact of Korean research through increased publication in high-impact international journals. Finally, this study underscores the substantial manual effort required to convert Korean-language bibliographic data into English for analysis. If KCI were to provide a function for exporting bibliographic records directly in English, it could significantly reduce the workload for researchers and promote greater engagement with bibliometric methods in analyzing domestic literature.

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