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Research Article

Podcasting as a Tool for Developing Oral Proficiency and Selfregulated Learning Strategies: Insights from Turkish EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of podcasts on high school students' English language learning, focusing on speaking performance and selfregulated learning strategies. The widespread adoption of digital communication technologies has transformed education, necessitating the integration of technology to enhance learning outcomes. Using a qualitative approach, the study investigates the general English learning habits of students, their perceptions of using podcasts to improve speaking skills, and how podcasts influence their ability to self-regulate learning. Findings reveal that students actively engage with English-language media, benefiting from enhanced listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. Recording podcasts fosters confidence and fluency in speaking, while also promoting goal setting, planning, and reflective practices. The study highlights the importance of integrating podcasts into EFL instruction to create a dynamic learning environment that supports students' language proficiency goals. The results contribute to the literature on educational technology and underscore the potential of podcasts to improve language learning experiences.







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Introduction

The current worldwide educational environment in the twenty-first century is undergoing a significant shift due to the widespread adoption of digital communication technologies and pervasive networked applications. This transformation is also influenced by the evolving characteristics, requirements, and expectations of students. The utilization of technologies in the field of education holds significant importance as it serves to provide essential assistance to educators, students, and the overall learning process, hence enhancing their effectiveness in mastering the subject matter. Speaking skills are essential for effective communication; however, teaching speaking skills to non-native speakers in an environment where English is taught as a foreign language has always been a significant challenge for

educators. Students fail to engage in sufficient listening practice to acquire the appropriate speaking style, which leads to inadequate speaking abilities. The non-native speakers are significantly impeded by their inability to discern the tone and intonation, as well as their lack of vocabulary. Achieving speaking skills, including the correct pronunciation of English letters, intonation, confidence, and the correct use of vocabulary, is a persistent challenge for both instructors and learners, even when considering factors such as stress, accent, and pronunciation. Whenever they succeed in achieving one, they fail to accomplish the other. (Hamad, et al., 2019). Numerous studies have explored the integration of technology in language education. Hismanoglu (2012) highlighted that incorporating technology into the classroom benefits both teachers and students by fostering a positive learning environment, thereby improving the overall teaching and learning processes. The present study focuses on examining the potential impact of educational technology, particularly Pod-casts as a Web 2 tool on students' English language learning, with a specific emphasis on their speaking performance and students' using self-regulated strategies in speaking skills.

The pervasive integration of technology into everyday life has significantly enhanced the availability of resources and facilitated social contact, hence establishing informal learning venues as a prominent means of acquiring knowledge (Bonk, 2010). Whithaus and Neff (2006) posited that instructors can employ a web-based teaching methods and provided students with the opportunity to use videos for self-learning. Hong (2006) proposes the utilization of technology as a means to enhance students' oral performance in the acquisition of speaking abilities. As noted by Thornbury (2005), the effective teaching of speaking skills requires the implementation of "talking classrooms" where the active engagement in speaking activities is considered an essential component of the instructional setting. Consequently, students will improve their oral communication abilities and experience a growing sense of self-assurance when engaging in spoken discourse in the target language. In contemporary society, the acquisition of technological skills has become an essential prerequisite for individuals seeking job opportunities. There exist a multitude of educational technology applications, devices, and software that possess potential utility for learners. Alhamami (2013) investigated the effectiveness of YouTube LLVs as comprehensive language courses that do not necessitate supplementary language materials. As Mahrooqi and Naqvi (2014) stated the domain of education has had significant impact from the potential afforded by technology, which has carved out a specialized role in the realm of



foreign language instruction, thereby expanding the range of traditional teaching approaches. The acquisition of a foreign language poses challenges and intricacies for a significant number of students. Therefore, it is imperative for educational institutions to efficiently allocate time and resources in order to deliver language teaching tailored to accommodate students with diverse learning styles.

The facilitation of the self-regulation could be achieved through the utilization of technologies as well. Kitsantas and Dabbagh (2011) recognize the considerable potential of Web 2.0 social software technologies, encompassing communication tools, resource and experience exchange tools, and social network tools, in fostering self-regulation. Digital technologies provide a means for accessing many learning alternatives and possibilities that promote the development of self-regulation abilities (Bernacki, & Byrnes 2011). Taking advantage of self-regulated learning (SRL), a significant number of EFL learners actively pursue extracurricular opportunities to enhance their overall English proficiency, with a specific focus on improving their speaking abilities (Uztosun, 2020). Numerous scholars have conducted studies on the utilization of technology by EFL learners, both in synchronous settings within the classroom and asynchronously outside the confines of the class, without any temporal or spatial limitations. One of those technologies is the podcast. It is a digital medium that emerged during the era of Web 2.0 and has the potential to be utilized as an educational resource. Engaging in listening activities can facilitate the enhancement of students' listening skills, critical thinking abilities, and intrinsic motivation to actively engage in the act of listening, so fostering the cultivation of a genuine appreciation for the auditory experience. Cebeci and Tekdal (2006) explained the current discourse is around the potential of podcasting as an innovative e-learning technology that has the capacity to revolutionize the field of mobile learning. Podcasting, also known as audiocasting, is a straightforward implementation of audio content syndication that primarily focuses on delivering material to mobile digital devices using audioblogs hosted on the Internet. According to Meng (2005, p. 1), podcasting can be defined as the act of recording an audio event, such as a speech, song, or combination of sounds, and subsequently uploading the resulting digital sound object onto a website or blog using a data structure known as an RSS 2.0 envelope or feed.

Research studies investigating the use of podcasts in educational settings have demonstrated that podcasts possess the capacity to enhance not just auditory comprehension abilities but also spoken communication proficiencies (Stefancik & Stradiotová, 2020). As



exemplified by McGarr (2009), podcasting is the act of distributing audio or video content in a digital format. The software can be obtained either through manual downloading from the internet or through automatic distribution to subscribers. These files can be easily accessed directly from the desktop or transferred to a media device. One of the primary benefits of incorporating podcasting into educational settings is the inherent portability and ease it offers, allowing learners to access educational resources at their own discretion and in various locations, without necessitating substantial technological expertise. Podcasts have the capability to be downloaded automatically onto a wide range of mobile devices. The utilization of mobile devices allows learners to access and engage with learning materials at their convenience, enabling them to listen to the content at a location and timeframe of their choosing. However, despite the aforementioned technological benefit associated with podcasting, there exist certain considerations that need to be taken into account prior to incorporating podcasts into instructional methods that are centered around objects (Cebeci & Tekdal, 2006).

Podcasting offers educators the opportunity to access up-to-date and captivating resources for their students, thereby fostering motivation to engage with audio materials that align with their personal interests. Both teachers and students have the capability to produce their own podcasts.

Lim and Chan (2007) underscored the changing roles of teachers, evolving from recipients of knowledge to active constructors of knowledge, while also noting the shift in technology's role from simply being a learning tool to becoming a key facilitator of knowledge construction. Within this context, self-regulated learning (SRL) emerges as a pivotal concept. Azevedo, Cromley and Seibert (2004) argued that technology-enhanced learning environments utilize the SRL framework as a scaffold to assist students in learning. Chen (2021, 2022) highlighted the increasing importance of technology-enhanced self-regulated learning (SRL), especially in an era where technology influences every aspect of education.

Considering the fact that contemporary youth heavily rely on technology in general, podcasts in particular as a significant information resource, It can be said that this platform to be valuable in the context of the educational process. The efficiency of instruction can be enhanced when compared to the utilization of conventional teaching tools. From this conceptual standpoint the primary aim of this study is to investigate the viability of



developing speaking skills and the importance of SRL in enhancing the oral competency of EFL learners. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of learner podcasts. Consequently, the present study aimed to explore the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners enrolled in a Science High School about the effects of creating and using podcasts on their English speaking abilities and their use of SRL strategies. And it is hoped to contribute to the field with considerable results. By this aim, the current study will discuss using podcasts in EFL context in general, with a specific focus on teaching speaking, and the necessity of employing SRL in improving oral proficiency. Subsequently, the results will be presented and a comprehensive discussion will be held.

Podcasts as a Tool in EFL Teaching Classes

Research into podcasting as a pedagogical tool suggests that it can help students improve their mastery of the English language. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories have emphasized the importance of learning and teaching language in a communicative environment through the use of authentic resources. To enhance learners' English competence, the integration of podcasts into language education as additional materials, alongside course materials, has been suggested (Istanto, 2011; Lee & Chan, 2007). Learners' motivation can be boosted by providing them with understandable input in a relevant setting. As such, podcasts help educators realize these core aims of second language instruction. Learners can gain access to real-world examples through podcasts. Students can utilize these resources to practice their listening skills or create their own podcasts. Podcasts can be accessed and shared in a matter of seconds using the World Wide Web (Royal & Von Koss, 2008).

Podcasts encompass a wide range of content categories and are offered by diverse sources or individuals known as podcasters. The primary providers of content include broadcasters who distribute their radio programs or specially recorded content on the internet, performers seeking to promote their material, film studios offering film trailers for promotional purposes (both mainstream and independent studios), individuals with a desire to express or share something, and educational institutions and teachers who offer learning content across various disciplines. Originally, these were mostly focused on technological aspects (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). According to Gromik (2008), podcasting gives students "full access authentic resources" even in non-English speaking environments. Furthermore,



podcasts provide a real-life source that all learners of a foreign language are free to benefit from.

Podcasting offers benefits for both students and educators, presenting two options for implementation: utilizing pre-existing podcasts or developing original podcasts. The advancements in podcasting technologies have yielded two primary prospective applications: the creation of podcasts and the utilization of the available podcast materials. The two-alternative model is depicted by Rosell-Aguilar (2007: 476) in the following manner.



Figure 1. Taxonomy of uses of podcasting for language learning (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007).

As stated by Dudeney and Hockly (2007), in the context of higher education, it is typical for instructors to utilize podcasts as a means of recording their lectures and disseminating them to students for subsequent auditory consumption. These lecture podcasts provide students who are unable to attend the courses with the opportunity to access the lecture content by downloading podcasts into their mobile devices, such as MP3 players or laptops.

This phenomenon is alternatively referred to as 'course casting'. Academic instructors have the ability to utilize pre-recorded standard lectures in the form of podcasts, which can be disseminated to students at designated intervals during the academic calendar. Furthermore, individuals have the capability to create and produce their own educational audio recordings, commonly referred to as lecture podcasts, with the intention of providing consistent learning opportunities for students. Likewise, podcasts can be advantageous in the context of teacher training. Trainees have the potential to enhance their understanding of methodology and enhance their teaching skills through the utilization of various podcasts.

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There are two primary categories of podcasts for anyone interested in podcast creation: podcasts produced by educators and podcasts produced by students. According to Meng (2005:5), there are several potential applications for the creation of podcasts:

- The task involves the process of capturing and disseminating news broadcasts.
- The teacher's notes are recorded.
- Lectures are recorded and disseminated straight to students' MP3 devices.
- Documented minutes of meetings and conferences.
- Academic endeavors and interviews with the purpose of supporting student projects.
- •The process of documenting and preserving oral history through archiving and facilitating access to it as per request.

Language learning podcast resources can be categorized into two primary kinds. The first group consists of real information created by native speakers of the target language, particularly intended for use by native speakers. Examples of such content include news feeds and radio programming. The second category comprises language courses or instructional materials that are expressly tailored for the purpose of language acquisition. This content can be categorized, similar to other online learning materials, as comprehensive independent courses that aim to function as virtual classrooms or supplementary activities to traditional classroom instruction or distance education (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007).

According to Fontichiaro (2008), offering students the opportunity to engage with podcasts that align with their personal interests can enhance their motivation to learn. In their study, Hasan and Hoon (2013) conducted an analysis of twenty scholarly journal articles in order to investigate the impact of podcasts on the language proficiency of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, as well as their attitudes and beliefs towards the use of podcasts as a learning tool. The findings of the literature review have demonstrated that podcasts not only facilitate the improvement of learners' listening and speaking abilities, but also contribute to the development of other language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The investigation conducted by Sze (2006), an instructor from Hong Kong, focused on examining the particular benefits associated with utilizing podcasts for language acquisition. The author has examined the ways in which students' listening and speaking abilities can be enhanced by engaging with podcasts. According to Stanley (as mentioned in Sze, 2006), podcasting is characterized as an innovative technological tool that holds significant promise in improving the listening and speaking comprehension skills of



second language learners. Due to the ease of downloading podcasts on various devices, learners are afforded the opportunity to engage in several listening practices regardless of their location. The accessibility of podcast creation tools and the wide global reach of potential listeners serve as strong incentives for students to engage in the production of their own podcasts. Additionally, podcast production offers enough opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful language use.

Using Podcasts in Teaching Speaking

Podcasts offer learners the opportunity to engage in repeated listening experiences, serving as educational tools that facilitate the enhancement of students' speaking abilities within a meaningful environment. Furthermore, these opportunities provide students the ability to improve their self-monitoring skills, hence fostering the development of learner autonomy (Royal & Von Koss, 2008). Syosoyev (2014) proposed a potential algorithm with several steps for the improvement of listening and speaking abilities using podcasts. In that algorithm the teacher introduces the service platform, on which the placement of student podcasts and their network interaction will take place, as well as the assessment criteria for their participation in educational activities, before explaining to the class the project's purpose and goals in the first stage. The next stage allows the teacher to develop a unique page just for his particular group of students utilizing some social media tools. This page provides a summary of the assignment or project so that it is evident to all visitors what the posted podcasts are about (subjects) and who made them (students or learners). It is advised that the instructor record a podcast explaining the assignment and introducing the project participants in a foreign language for 1-2 minutes. The teacher instructs the students on the guidelines for online information security in the fourth phase. Then, the preparation of a speech's (or podcast's) text is encouraged for students. Each student may introduce himself and state his age, residence, and course of study at the commencement. The next step is to dedicate a podcast to the chosen subject. Students also gain writing abilities at this stage; depending on the assignment, they produce texts that are descriptive, argumentative, or comparative in nature. The teacher should assist the students in creating grammatically and lexically sound speech text that will then be recorded and placed on the podcast service for additional discussion. In the subsequent phase, the students have the capability to capture their remarks by utilizing contemporary network software. The utilization of network software enables the ability to repeatedly capture a performance till the learner attains a level



of satisfaction with the overall quality. The podcast will only be saved in the network and made accessible to all project participants subsequent to that. It is imperative that classmates and the teacher devote their full attention to viewing or listening to each of the podcasts produced by the students during extracurricular periods. Following the completion of each student's podcast, all students are cordially encouraged to engage in a network-based conversation pertaining to the podcasts. Students may be assigned the responsibility of engaging with a podcast by either viewing or listening to it, and subsequently sharing their concise reviews and comments on the content and/or structure of the podcast on a microblog platform. Subsequently, students engage in an assessment of their ability to clarify the fundamental nature of the topic being discussed. They attempt to appreciate the specific challenges encountered and the underlying reasons for these difficulties throughout the project. Additionally, they explain the necessary steps to enhance their performance in future endeavors. Finally, the instructor assesses the students' outcomes based on predetermined criteria.

In relation to the impact of podcasting on learners' speaking proficiency, McQuillan (2006) proposed a variety of activities that prioritize learners' oral expression. These responsibilities encompass many speaking activities, such as conducting talk shows, engaging in interviews with individuals who are native speakers, and utilizing audio diaries. In the assigned tasks, learners are expected to engage in the process of recording both themselves and their classmates as part of a classroom assignment. The purpose of this activity is to collect speech samples which will then be submitted to the teacher for assessment (p.16). Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that the use of podcasts in the development of oral skills alone considerably boosts student enthusiasm and adds variety to the process of teaching languages at schools and colleges (Solomatina, 2011). The research conducted by Farangi et al. (2016) examined the incorporation of podcasts into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) schools. The results of the study indicated that the incorporation of podcasts into language classrooms had a notable impact on the enhancement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' oral communication abilities. Jain and Hashmi (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the benefits associated with the utilization of podcasts inside English Language Classrooms. Based on Jain and Hashmi (2013), both educators and students have the ability to produce their own podcasts utilizing



platforms. Podcast websites provide students the opportunity to engage in diverse listening exercises, so facilitating the enhancement of their oral competence skills.

Podcast's Role in Fostering Students' Self-Regulation

Contemporary research indicates an increasing recognition of the imperative to facilitate and promote learner autonomy across the entirety of the learning process (Dron, 2007). SRL is widely recognized as a highly impactful approach to learning. It pertains to the extent to which students exhibit proactive and responsible engagement in their own learning process (Zimmerman, 2008). Self-regulated learners assume full responsibility for all aspects of their learning, including but not limited to the stages of planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Furthermore, they actively participate in the learning process. The investigation of this student-centered learning approach, which aims to better prepare learners for real-life situations, is necessary in language classrooms in order to attain higher levels of success. Several researchers have turned their attention towards individuals who exhibit self-regulatory behaviors in regards to their academic activities and performance.

According to Zimmerman and Cleary (2009), a study was conducted to examine the performance of learners who are capable of regulating their own practices compared to pupils who lack this ability. The investigation revealed that the former group achieved superior outcomes. Scholars have conducted investigations on the ways in which learning technology can facilitate or enhance student self-regulated learning (Kitsantas & Dabbagh, 2011).

There is significant promise for the use of Web 2.0 social software applications to aid in students' efforts to self-regulate. Social software enables instructors to facilitate student engagement through online forums and aids in monitoring their progress towards achieving task mastery. This feature plays a crucial role in promoting students' self-regulation (Kitsantas & Dabbagh, 2011).

Purpose of the Study and the Research Questions

Most students follow the lead of their foreign language instructors by focusing on developing their ability to communicate effectively in English (Gryshchenko & Sydorenko, 2014). Regarding foreign language teaching, particularly in the Turkish context, EFL students have difficulties improving their speaking abilities because they are not exposed to the target language, English, outside of the classroom. Therefore, they require additional comprehensible input in addition to the speaking tasks they should complete in English



classes in order to practice English. Learners can develop their communicative skills in a stress-free environment outside of class by listening to recordings. One advantage of utilizing podcasts is the potential to offer students supplementary opportunities for hearing in a foreign language, so enhancing their listening abilities. Additionally, podcasts give a platform for practicing the target language and improving oral proficiency. Podcasts offer the flexibility to be accessed and utilized on various portable digital devices, regardless of whether an internet connection is available. This versatility eliminates limitations related to time and location. Therefore, students have the opportunity to enhance their language abilities independently outside of the traditional classroom setting, thereby fostering their autonomy as learners. Regarding this matter, the notion of learner autonomy can be defined as the capacity to independently regulate and direct one's own learning process (Holec, 1981). Hence, the utilization of podcasts has a significant impact on learners' self-regulation in the realm of language acquisition as a whole, with a specific emphasis on enhancing oral proficiency. Upon reviewing the pertinent literature, it was ascertained that there exist studies encompassing the perspectives of both students and teachers, which indicate that the utilization of Podcasts has a positive impact on the enhancement of other skills, (Gromik, 2008; Istanto, 2011; Li, 2012) and speaking skills (Farangi et al., 2016; Jain & Hashmi, 2013; McQuillan, 2006; Solomatina, 2011; Syosoyev, 2014). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is currently a lack of study investigating the impact of podcasts on students' self-regulation in the context of for EFL speaking skills. This research aimed to investigate the students' perspectives of using podcasts by formulating three research questions as the primary components of the study.

1-What are the general English language learning habits of high school students, and how do these habits influence their overall language proficiency and engagement in EFL contexts?

- 2- What are the perceptions of learners regarding the influence of using podcasts as a means of enhancing their EFL speaking skills?
- 3- What are the perceptions of learners regarding the influence of using podcasts on their ability to self-regulate their learning in terms of speaking skills?



Method

In the field of social sciences, researchers primarily strive to elucidate various perspectives on comprehending social reality (Jackson, et al., 2007). Qualitative research primarily centers on the examination of human experiences and reflections (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Jackson and his colleagues. (2007), it is necessary for participants to provide detailed and comprehensive comments regarding their experiences, since this contributes to the overall depth and quality of study. This study was methodologically planned to employ a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather indepth insights into the participants' experiences. The interviews were conducted in person, and data were collected through audio recordings, which were then transcribed and coded for the analysis. This approach allowed for a rich exploration of the participants' perceptions of podcasting in relation to their oral proficiency and self-regulated learning strategies. The qualitative methodology was chosen to capture the subjective experiences of the participants and to provide a deeper understanding of their engagement with podcasts.

Trustworthiness

According to Guba (1981), a widely recognized authority in this field, there are four criteria that must be satisfied in order to establish the trustworthiness of a study. The four key criteria that are commonly utilized in academic research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher endeavored to adhere to these criteria during the course of the investigation, which will be expounded upon extensively in this section.

Credibility

Credibility is a fundamental factor in establishing trustworthiness, as emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985). According to Merriam (1998), researchers should strive to determine the level of congruence between their findings and reality. In the present study, many measures have been undertaken to assure the credibility of the research. One method that might be employed is the random sampling of participants. Bouma and Atkinson (1995) argue in favor of employing random sampling in qualitative research, asserting that the selection of participants through random means ensures their representativeness of the larger population. There exist several methods to promote integrity among participants.



According to Shenton (2004), it is imperative that participants are provided with the opportunity to decline participation in the study. The participants in this study were selected on a voluntary basis, a factor believed to enhance the research's credibility. Another crucial component in establishing credibility is the researcher's background, qualifications, and experience, as highlighted by Shenton (2004). Patton (1990) underscored the significance of the researcher's credibility as the principal actor responsible for data collection and interpretation (as mentioned in Shenton, 2004). The researcher involved in this study possesses a strong academic background, encompassing 10 years of experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and lecturing, along with a diverse range of qualitative research endeavors.

Transferability

Merriam (1998) posits that transferability refers to the concept of external validity, which pertains to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to different contexts or populations. However, Shenton (2004) argued that the generalizability of findings from a qualitative study with a limited sample size is limited and cannot be extrapolated to other populations and contexts. Given that the results are limited in scope to the persons involved. This research does not claim that the perspectives of the participants are representative of others, as it acknowledges the influence of their country-specific circumstances and personal factors.

Dependability

In other ways, it might be referred to as reliability. The statement implies that if the study were to be replicated under same circumstances, employing the same methodologies and involving the same people, comparable findings would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). According to Lincoln and Guba (1981), a robust correlation exists between credibility and dependability. If a researcher establishes the circumstances of the former, they will likewise establish the terms of the latter. According to Shenton (2004), it is imperative for researchers to provide a comprehensive account of the method in order to assure the trustworthiness of their findings. Therefore, this study is considered reliable since it presented multiple variables essential for establishing credibility and provided a comprehensive account of the research process.



Confirmability

According to Patton (1990) as stated in Shenton (2004), the attainment of objectivity in qualitative research poses a significant challenge when relying on human-made instruments. In order to mitigate the potential influence of subjectivity, the researchers sought the assistance of two academics from the Education Faculty to review the responses provided by the participants and validate the assigned codes. They were involved in reviewing the participants' responses. After an initial round of coding was completed by the researcher, the academics independently assessed the assigned codes for accuracy and consistency. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved through a consensus, ensuring the reliability of the coding process. A voice recorder was used to capture the interviews, and these recordings will be retained to ensure confirmability.

Participants

"The study included a sample of 10 EFL learners, all of whom were 10th-grade female students currently enrolled in a science high school located in a city in the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey. The school was intentionally selected due to the English language teacher's prior experience utilizing podcasts in the curriculum over the past two years. The participants, aged between 15 and 16, have been learning English as a foreign language since early in their educational journey, consistently demonstrating a strong interest in the English language. These students are particularly motivated to improve their English skills, frequently leveraging technology to enhance their learning experience, with a specific focus on podcasts. Under the guidance of their English language teacher, they have been using podcasts as a key tool for self-improvement. Based on their school curriculum and their teacher's evaluation, the students were at an intermediate to upper-intermediate level of English proficiency, allowing for meaningful engagement with the podcasting activities. Their sustained involvement in EFL provides a rich context for exploring their perceptions of how podcasting influences both their speaking skills and their ability to self-regulate in language learning. This specific cohort, with their solid EFL foundation and proactive use of technology, offers valuable insights at a crucial stage of their educational development."



Data Collection

The data were gathered by administering an interview form that was meticulously developed by the researcher, who thoroughly examined the relevant literature. The researcher sought guidance from two professors in the Education Faculty regarding the questions in order to ensure their breadth and applicability to the research. The questions were updated based on the recommendations provided. Therefore, a set of three inquiries was formulated in order to investigate the perspectives of EFL students about the impact of using podcasts on their oral proficiency and self-regulation in enhancing their speaking skills. The interviews, which were done in person, aimed to gather participants' comments on the procedure and were recorded using a voice recorder. In order to ensure a conducive atmosphere, the interviews were conducted in the participants' native tongue, specifically Turkish. The audio recordings were sequentially translated, transcribed, and afterwards subjected to analysis. In order to protect the privacy of the students, direct quotations were provided using codes such as S1 and S2, which corresponded to the first student participating in the interview.

Finding

The data analysis showed the participants' perspectives regarding their overall English language learning habits, the impact of utilizing podcasts, and the effect of using podcasts on their capacity to independently manage their learning in terms of speaking skills. The findings for each research topic are presented below.

RQ 1. What are the general English language learning habits of high school students, and how do these habits influence their overall language proficiency and engagement in EFL contexts?

The first research question provided the two categories and codes presented in Table 1.

Table 1. General English language learning habits and motivations of students

General Categories	Codes	Frequency
Study Habits and Techniques	Watching and Listening to	9
	English Content	
	Regular Practice and	6
	Homework Completion	
Motivation and Attitude	Intrinsic	6
	Extrinsic	4
	Attitude	3
TOTAL		28



The data analysis identified two major categories for the first research question. Analyzing the responses, the researcher categorized the first category as 'Study Habits and Techniques' (F=15). The respondents indicated the extent to which students watch Englishlanguage movies, TV shows, and videos, as well as listen to English-language music, podcasts, and audiobooks for the first code (F=9). S1 commented 'I love watching Englishlanguage movies and TV shows because it helps me understand the language better and pick up new words. I also listen to podcasts and audiobooks in English, which makes learning fun and keeps me engaged even outside of school'. And S4 'Listening to English music and watching videos on YouTube really helps me with my pronunciation and understanding different accents. It's a great way to learn without feeling like I'm studying'. The findings indicate that a significant number of students actively engage with English-language movies, TV shows, videos, music, podcasts, and audiobooks as part of their language learning habits. This engagement is perceived to be highly beneficial in enhancing their language skills. The second code referred to the frequency and consistency with which students complete their English homework and engage in additional practice exercises (F=6). S9 reported 'I make sure to finish my English homework and often use language learning apps for additional practice. It helps me reinforce what I learn in class'. S8 'I do my English homework regularly, but I only do extra practice when I have upcoming exams. It's hard to find the time otherwise'. The data indicated that most students consistently finish their English homework, but their level of involvement in additional practice assignments differs. Six students emphasized the significance of consistently doing their homework, acknowledging that it helps in reinforcing classroom learning and fostering confidence.

Based on the students' responses regarding their study habits and techniques, it is evident that these behaviors are influenced by a variety of motivational and attitudinal factors. The second category is 'Motivation and Attitude,' to understand how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as well as students' overall attitudes towards learning English, impact their language learning experiences and outcomes. Six students stated the internal drive and personal interest students have in learning English, including their passion for the language and its cultural aspects. S7 commented 'I have a strong desire to communicate with people from different backgrounds, and English is the key to doing that. My personal interest in languages fuels my motivation'. S6 said 'I've always been curious about American culture, and learning English helps me explore that curiosity. Watching documentaries and reading articles in English makes the



learning process enjoyable'. The other code is 'Extrinsic Motivation' (F=4). Students revealed the external factors motivating them to learn English, such as grades, parental expectations, and future career aspirations. S3 put it 'My parents always emphasize the importance of learning English for my future career. They believe that being fluent in English will give me better job opportunities and a competitive edge'. The last code is 'Attitudes' (F=3) which referred to the overall attitude and mentality of students toward their learning of English, which encompasses their confidence levels, anxiety regarding speaking, and perception of the language's significance. S7 reported 'I know English is important for my future, especially for studying abroad and getting a good job. However, I often feel anxious during speaking exercises because I'm afraid of mispronouncing words or forgetting vocabulary'.

Given these insights, it is essential to delve deeper into the second research question. Understanding how podcasts specifically impact students' speaking skills can provide valuable information for developing effective EFL teaching strategies that leverage students' interests and motivations, ultimately fostering a more engaging and productive learning environment.

RQ2. What are the perceptions of learners regarding the influence of using podcasts as a means of enhancing their EFL speaking skills?

The participants' responses to that question revealed two primary categories: listening to podcasts and recording podcasts as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Podcast usage by participants

General Categories	Codes	Frequency
Listening to Podcasts	Listening Comprehension	10
	Vocabulary and Pronunciation	8
Recording Podcasts	Confidence and Fluency in	8
	Speaking	
	Practical Application of	7
	Language Skills	
TOTAL		33

By regularly engaging with podcasts, learners can improve their listening comprehension, familiarize themselves with different accents and enhance their vocabulary and pronunciation. This section revealed how listening to podcasts contributes to these aspects of language learning and its perceived benefits among the science high school students. The first code emerged was 'listening comprehension' (F=10). All of the participants indicated that how listening to podcasts helps them understand spoken English



better, including various accents. As S1 put it 'I follow a travel podcast where the host interviews people from various countries. This variety has greatly improved my comprehension skills, especially when it comes to understanding different accents and colloquial expressions'. Talking about the same issue S2 stated 'Podcasts expose me to various speaking styles and speeds. For example, I listen to an American podcast where the hosts speak very quickly, and it has improved my ability to keep up with fast-paced conversations.' 80% of those who were interviewed indicated that listening to podcasts improved their vocabulary and pronunciation. For example, S10 reported 'Podcasts that focus on current events help me learn how native speakers discuss news and use specific terms. This exposure has improved both my understanding and usage of up-to-date vocabulary.' Likewise, S7 stated 'Listening to storytelling podcasts has introduced me to a wide range of expressions and idioms. I now feel more confident using these in my own conversations.'

While listening to podcasts provides students with substantial benefits in terms of comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation, actively recording their own podcasts offers another dimension of language learning. This interactive and practical approach allows students to apply their language skills in real-world contexts, fostering confidence and fluency. It is time to delve into how recording podcasts influences learners' EFL speaking skills, emphasizing the development of their speaking abilities (F=8) and practical language application (F=7). S8 commented 'Recording podcasts made me realize how much my speaking has improved. Listening back to my recordings shows me where I can still improve and where I've made progress.' S5 reported 'I noticed a big difference in my speaking abilities after starting to record podcasts. It forces me to think quickly and structure my sentences properly, which is great practice.' Having established how recording podcasts can significantly enhance students' speaking abilities by fostering confidence and fluency, it is also crucial to explore the practical applications of this activity. By creating their own podcasts, students not only practice speaking but also engage in structuring their thoughts and presenting them coherently, thereby applying their language skills in meaningful ways. S6 said 'The process of planning and recording podcasts has taught me to pay attention to my grammar and vocabulary usage. It's a practical way to apply what I learn in class to real-world scenarios.' S9 also stated 'Working on podcasts has been a great way to practice and improve my language skills. I've learned to think on my feet and express my ideas more clearly and confidently.'

Having explored the benefits of both listening to and recording podcasts for enhancing students' EFL speaking skills, it is essential to consider how these activities impact



students' ability to self-regulate their learning. Self-regulation in language learning involves setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on performance. The next section delves into learners' perceptions of how using podcasts influences their self-regulation abilities in developing their speaking skills, providing insights into the strategies they adopt to manage and improve their learning process.

RQ 3. What are the perceptions of learners regarding the influence of using podcasts on their ability to self-regulate their learning in terms of speaking skills?

Engaging with podcasts as a language learning tool not only aids in skill development but also significantly impacts students' ability to self-regulate their learning. The responses revealed the categories and codes as seen in table 3.

Table 3. Podcasts on the students' ability on self-regulation

General Categories	Codes	Frequency
Goal Setting and Planning	Setting Specific Language	8
	Goals	
	Planning Practice Sessions	7
Monitoring and Reflecting	Tracking Progress Over Time	6
	Self-Assessment and Feedback	4
	Reflective Learning Practices	2
TOTAL		27

One of the key aspects of self-regulation is goal setting and planning. This category explores how students use podcasts to set specific language goals, plan their practice sessions, and identify areas for improvement in their speaking skills (F=15). The first code emerged is 'Setting Specific Language Goals' (F=8). S7 commented 'Podcasts inspire me to set weekly speaking goals. For instance, if I hear a new expression or phrase, I make it a goal to use it in my conversations that week.' From another perspective S10 commented 'I use podcasts to set detailed language goals, like focusing on improving my ability to understand and use idiomatic expressions that native speakers frequently use'. Having established that students use podcasts to set specific language goals, it is also important to consider how they plan their practice sessions to achieve these goals. The second code (F=7) explored how podcasts assist the participants in organizing and structuring their language practice activities, ensuring they make the most of their learning time and stay on track with their objectives. S9 put it 'I organize my language practice by incorporating podcast activities. I plan to listen to a podcast, take notes on key phrases, and then practice using those phrases in my own recordings'. On the other

hand, S6 reported 'I use podcasts to create a structured practice routine. For example, I listen to a podcast in the morning and then spend the evening practicing speaking about the same topics'. While goal setting and planning practice sessions are crucial components of self-regulated learning, monitoring and reflecting on progress are equally important. The next category revealed how students use podcasts to track their improvement, assess their performance, and engage in reflective learning practices to enhance their EFL speaking skills(F=12). The first code is 'Tracking Progress Over Time' (F=6). S7 alluded 'Listening to my recorded podcasts helps me identify areas where I've made progress, such as speaking more naturally and confidently'. S1 stated 'I track my progress by regularly listening to my old podcast recordings. It's encouraging to hear how much my pronunciation and fluency have improved over time'. The second code is 'Self-Assessment and Feedback' (F=4). S3 reported 'I often ask my friends or teachers to listen to my podcast recordings and provide feedback. Their input helps me understand my strengths and weaknesses better'. Similarly, S9 stated 'Getting feedback on my podcast recordings has been invaluable. My teacher's comments on my pronunciation and use of expressions have guided my learning process.' The last code explored how podcasts encourage students to reflect on their learning processes and adapt their approaches to improve their EFL speaking skills (F=2). S7 said 'I use a journal to reflect on my podcast activities. Writing about what I learned and how I felt during the process helps me understand my learning journey better and stay motivated'. S5 reported 'I analyze my mistakes and successes, which helps me refine my language learning strategies'. Overall, the incorporation of podcasts into EFL instruction not only helps in the establishment and attainment of specific language objectives but also enables structured practice, ongoing self-assessment, and reflective learning, thereby substantially improving students' self-regulation capabilities and speaking abilities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current worldwide educational environment in the twenty-first century is undergoing a significant shift due to the widespread adoption of digital communication technologies and pervasive networked applications. This transformation is influenced by the evolving characteristics, requirements, and expectations of students. As mentioned in the literature review part the use of technologies in education holds significant importance as it provides essential assistance to educators, students, and the overall learning process, enhancing their effectiveness in mastering the subject matter (Bonk, 2010). Creating a technology-enhanced learning environment has become an essential aspect of 21st-century



education, and understanding how to implement this effectively is crucial. Hong (2006) proposed that utilizing technology can enhance students' oral performance in acquiring speaking abilities, while Thornbury (2005) emphasized the importance of creating "talking classrooms" where active engagement in speaking activities is integral. This is essential for improving oral communication abilities and building self-assurance in spoken discourse. Additionally, Mahrooqi and Naqvi (2014) highlighted the significant impact of technology on the field of education, particularly in foreign language instruction, where it expands traditional teaching approaches.

The facilitation of self-regulation through technology is also noteworthy. Kitsantas and Dabbagh (2011) recognized the considerable potential of Web 2.0 technologies in fostering self-regulation by providing tools for communication, resource exchange, and social networking. Technologies offer access to numerous learning alternatives and possibilities that promote self-regulation abilities (Bernacki & Byrnes, 2011). In the context of EFL learning, podcasts have emerged as a valuable tool for enhancing both listening and speaking skills, as well as fostering self-regulation (Uztosun, 2020).

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the general English language learning habits of high school students, the influence of podcasts on enhancing EFL speaking skills, and the impact of podcasts on students' ability to self-regulate their learning. The data analysis revealed that high school students engage in a variety of study habits and techniques, with a significant number of students actively watching and listening to Englishlanguage content such as movies, TV shows, music, podcasts, and audiobooks. This engagement has been perceived as highly beneficial in enhancing their language skills, particularly in comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. The consistency in completing homework and engaging in additional practice exercises further reinforces classroom learning and builds confidence. These results align with the findings of Arıkan and Yılmaz (2020), who emphasized the value of technology in minimizing errors and enhancing language learning. Their study suggested that incorporating more advanced technology, such as waveforms for recorded speech, would lead to more precise results and reduce rater error. These findings also parallel with previous research by Bonk (2010) who highlighted the importance of engaging with authentic language resources and the benefits of technology in language learning. Motivational and attitudinal factors play a crucial role in shaping these study habits. Intrinsic motivations, such as a personal interest in English



culture and literature, drive students to improve their language proficiency. Extrinsic motivations, including parental expectations and future career aspirations, also influence their learning behaviors. However, some students experience anxiety regarding speaking, which impacts their overall attitude towards learning English. Addressing these motivational and attitudinal factors can help in developing more effective teaching strategies that cater to students' interests and needs. This is consistent with the findings of Mahrooqi and Naqvi (2014), who emphasized the impact of technology on foreign language instruction and the need to tailor teaching methods to diverse learning styles.

Students expressed that listening to podcasts seemed to improve their listening comprehension, helped them become more familiar with various accents, and contributed to enhancing their vocabulary and pronunciation. Engaging with podcasts allows students to immerse themselves in authentic spoken English, making the learning process enjoyable and effective. The practical benefits of listening to podcasts are evident in the students' ability to understand different speaking styles and speeds, as well as their increased confidence in using new vocabulary and expressions. These results support the findings of Hasan and Hoon (2013) and the potential benefits highlighted by Cebeci and Tekdal (2006), who identified the advantages of using podcasts to improve listening comprehension and pronunciation. Hamad and his colleagues (2019) also found the utilization of the videos technique positively influences the proficiency of EFL learners in speaking, including their fluency and pronunciation. The study the conducted determined that utilizing videos and listening audio tracks is a highly successful method in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Recording podcasts offers an additional dimension of language learning by providing an interactive and practical approach to applying language skills. Students noted that recording their own podcasts fosters confidence and fluency in speaking, as it forces them to think quickly and structure their sentences properly. This activity not only improves their speaking abilities but also helps them apply what they learn in class to real-world contexts. By creating their own podcasts, students engage in meaningful language practice, which enhances their overall language proficiency. This is in line with the work of Stanley (2006), who highlighted the benefits of creating podcasts for practicing and improving language skills.

The use of podcasts has a significant impact on students' ability to self-regulate their learning. Students use podcasts to set specific language goals, plan their practice sessions,



and identify areas for improvement in their speaking skills. This goal-setting and planning process helps students stay organized and motivated, ensuring they make the most of their learning time. Additionally, students track their progress over time by listening to their old podcast recordings, which helps them identify improvements and areas that need further practice. This supports the findings of Kitsantas and Dabbagh (2011) and Bernacki and Byrnes (2011), who emphasized the role of technology in promoting self-regulation. Self-assessment and feedback are crucial components of self-regulation. Students often seek feedback from friends and teachers on their podcast recordings, which provides valuable insights into their strengths and weaknesses. This feedback helps guide their learning process and informs their practice strategies. Reflective learning practices, such as journaling about podcast activities and analyzing mistakes and successes, further enhance students' ability to self-regulate their learning. These reflective practices help students understand their learning journey better and make necessary adjustments to their study strategies. This aligns with the framework proposed by Zimmerman (2002) and Little (2007) on the importance of self-regulation in enhancing learning outcomes.

Overall, the incorporation of podcasts into EFL instruction offers numerous benefits for high school students. Podcasts are perceived as an engaging and potentially effective tool for improving listening comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Recording podcasts adds an interactive and practical dimension to language learning, fostering confidence and fluency in speaking. Furthermore, podcasts significantly impact students' ability to self-regulate their learning by promoting goal setting, planning, monitoring progress, and reflective practices.

To maximize the benefits of podcasts in EFL instruction, educators should consider integrating both listening and recording activities into their teaching strategies. This integration can help students develop essential language skills, increase their motivation and engagement, and enhance their ability to manage their own learning effectively. By leveraging the potential of podcasts, educators can create a more dynamic and productive language learning environment that supports students in achieving their language proficiency goals. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on the use of technology in language education and underscores the importance of incorporating innovative tools like podcasts to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes.



Limitation

One limitation of this study is that all the participants were female, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The female students were volunteers, and according to reports from their teacher, they demonstrated a higher willingness to both listen to and record podcasts compared to their male peers. This greater enthusiasm for podcast activities may have influenced the outcomes related to self-regulation and oral proficiency. Future research should aim to include a more gender-balanced sample to examine whether similar results would be observed with male students or a mixed-gender group.

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Author Contribution Statement

Seçil TÜMEN AKYILDIZ: Conception, design, literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, writing, and editing.

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