

## THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING PODCASTS ON ENGLISH SELF-EFFICACY

### Dil Öğrenme Podkestlerinin İngilizce Öz-yeterlik Algısına

#### Etkisi

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#### Abstract

Based on earlier research findings that experience affects self-efficacy perception, the present study probes into possible effects of E-learning experiences on English self-efficacy by enabling participants to listen to language learning podcasts repetitively and do related task-based activities. It focuses on first-year university students' self-efficacy perceptions of listening, speaking, reading and writing at elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Participants' self-efficacy perceptions concerning motivation and expectations are also analyzed. The quasi-experimental study has a pretest-posttest research design, in which a non-random convenience sample of 187 university students were given the English Self-Efficacy Scale before and after a 12-week podcast-based language learning program. Collected data are analyzed by using descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon signed rank test. Wilcoxon test results show that there is a statistically significant difference in participants' perceptions of their listening comprehension, speaking, and reading skills. Self-efficacy perceptions concerning writing have improved significantly, as well. These findings support the idea that novel technology-based applications can have positive outcomes for language learning. However, participants' self-efficacy perception concerning reading and understanding advanced level stories did not improve significantly. The finding that participants' self-efficacy perceptions concerning advanced level of proficiency did not improve may be due to the fact that the level of the podcasts and related tasks covered by the program was elementary and that the program duration was insufficient for gaining high self-efficacy for advanced level skills in English.

**Key words:** Self-efficacy, perception change, e-learning, m-learning, podcast.

#### Özet

Bu çalışma, daha önce yapılmış ve deneyimin öz-yeterlik algısını etkilediğini iddia eden çalışmaların savlarını test etmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında, katılımcıların dil öğrenme podkestlerini dinlemeleri ve ilgili görev-temelli aktiviteleri yapmaları sağlanarak, bu e-öğrenme deneyimlerinin İngilizce öz-yeterlik algısı üzerindeki muhtemel etkileri incelenmektedir. Çalışma üniversite birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin başlangıç, orta ve ileri düzeyde dinleme, konuşma, okuma ve yazma becerileri ile ilgili öz-yeterlik algılarına yoğunlaşmaktadır. Çalışmada katılımcıların motivasyon ve beklentiler ile ilgili öz-yeterlik algıları da incelemektedir. 187 kişilik rastlantısal olmayan uygunluk örnekleme 12 haftalık podkestlerle dil öğrenme programının başında ve sonunda İngilizce Öz-yeterlik Algısı Ölçeğinin verildiği bu yarı-deneySEL çalışma ön-test—son-test araştırma desenine sahiptir. Toplanan veriler betimsel istatistikler ve Wilcoxon işaretli sıra testi kullanılarak analiz edildi. Wilcoxon testi sonuçları katılımcıların duyduğunu anlama, konuşma ve okuma becerileri ile ilgili algılarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olduğunu göstermiştir. Yazma becerisi ile ilgili öz-yeterlik algısının da kayda değer biçimde geliştiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, yeni teknoloji-temelli uygulamaların yabancı dil öğrenmeye olumlu etkide bulunduğu görüşünü desteklemektedir. Ancak, katılımcıların ileri seviyedeki hikâyeleri okuma ve anlama ile ilgili öz-yeterlik algılarında anlamlı bir gelişme gözlenmemiştir. İleri İngilizce düzeyleri ile ilgili olarak katılımcıların öz-yeterlik algılarının olumlu yönde değişmemesi, podkestlerin ve ilgili aktivitelerin başlangıç düzeyinde olmasından ve program süresinin ileri İngilizce düzeylerine yönelik yüksek öz-yeterlik algısı için yetersiz olmasından kaynaklanmış olabilir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Öz-yeterlik, algı değişimi, e-öğrenme, m-öğrenme, podkest.

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers of English have frequently observed in their classrooms that students with poor proficiency in English are mostly those who do not believe that they can learn a foreign language. This observation is confirmed by a great amount of research on self-efficacy in foreign language learning, which has convincingly reported that there is a strong positive correlation between learners' self-efficacy and their EFL achievements (e.g. Peacock, 1999; Rahemi, 2007). Also, such students usually have misconceptions about the way a foreign language can be learned or taught. For example, when teachers avoid explicit grammar teaching, most students clearly express that they want the teacher to teach grammar. They believe that they can make sentences only if they are taught grammatical rules explicitly (Başaran, 2004). The crucial problem here is the fact that such negative beliefs, misconceptions and poor self-efficacy affect the whole process of foreign language learning and teaching (Horwitz, 1988; Leaver and Kaplan, 2004; Lee, 2003). Even those students who strenuously try to learn the language simply fail, turning the whole effort into useless toil and a vicious cycle.

Motivation is not an easy or ready-made solution and motivation may not easily defeat the sense of failure easily. What is more, a student-centered approach might seem very inhibiting for them and thus make some students feel completely helpless and lost (Hong, Lai and Holton, 2003). In such cases, encouraging students to take part in oral classroom activities or collaborate on conversational tasks can be useless. No matter how hard these students try, they only remember some abstract grammatical rules (Başaran, 2004). Is this only because such students do not have sufficient meaningful input to make generalizations naturally and effortlessly, the way an infant learns his/her mother tongue? Can there be other cognitive explanations? For example, do we learn a foreign language the way we construct our world knowledge and can, therefore, a constructivist view be accepted as the sole remedy? Or is it simply because chunks or word strings in the target language are not repeated enough through natural receptive (e.g. listening) and productive (e.g. speaking) skills? New technologies create new opportunities to further explore new ways to overcome persisting problems and help us find plausible answers for such questions. Language instruction podcasts may foster language learning by serving as tools for repetitive listening (Vijayalakshmi, 2009; Menezes & Moreira, 2011) and hence lead to possible changes in the learners' self-efficacy perception. There is a vast literature on perceived self-efficacy and a growing body of research has accumulated on mobile learning and podcasting. To the knowledge of the author, however, there has been no research focusing specifically on possible effects of podcasts upon self-efficacy perception of learning English as a foreign language. This study is expected to fill this gap by investigating self-efficacy perception of learners who used podcasts as language learning tools.

Although there has been ample research that focuses on learners' perceived self-efficacy in foreign language learning (e.g. Sim, 2007; Çubukçu, 2008), no studies that specifically investigated the effects of podcasts on self-efficacy perceptions have as yet been detected in the literature. Exploring possible effects of language learning podcasts on self-efficacy perceptions, this study tests the assertion that beliefs and perceptions do not tend to change as a result of novel applications (Fischer, 1992; Fischer, 1997; Tse, 2000; Peacock, 2001; Bakker, 2008). The study provides quantitative evidence for the nature of learners' self-efficacy perceptions before and after the process of implementing a task-based language learning program that comprises language learning podcasts and related tasks and compares the results.

The purpose of this study is to describe the impact of using podcasts as language learning tools and aids on learners' perceived self-efficacy in learning English as a foreign language. The main aim of the study is to investigate whether there is a significant change in freshman EFL students' perceived self-efficacy in EFL. More specifically, the present study aims at answering whether or not there is any difference between students' self-efficacy perceptions before and after using podcasts.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Perceived self-efficacy**

Perceived self-efficacy conceptualizes students' beliefs in their capabilities in a specified field or task. Bandura (2006) defines perceived self-efficacy as peoples' beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainments. Self-efficacy beliefs are related to motivational behavior and stand for individuals' perceptions of how capable they are of performing certain specific tasks or activities (Graham, 2007).

There has recently been a revived interest in self-efficacy as a psychological construct that plays important roles in many multi-dimensional and complex processes including, of course, foreign or second language learning. Self-efficacy is commonly defined as people's beliefs in their capabilities to accomplish or attain a desired goal or do a certain task (Bandura, 1997, 2006). In Bandura's terms these are "beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). The theoretical underpinnings of the construct self-efficacy build specifically on Bandura's social cognitive theory, which posits that people's beliefs about their efficacy affect their choices, objectives, level of effort and perseverance, resilience to adversity, vulnerability to stress and depression, and performance (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The words "belief" and "perception" are used interchangeably in conjunction with self-efficacy in related studies. Thus, the term appears as either "self-efficacy beliefs" or "self-efficacy perceptions" or sometimes as "perceived self-efficacy". The term "belief" seems to better reflect the complex nature of the term, for, unlike perception, it connotes that self-efficacy has deep roots in past experiences and close mutual ties with not only context but also personal traits and psychological constructs such as passion, tenacity, motivation and anxiety. Therefore, the term "self-efficacy beliefs" was used in the present study.

### **2.2. Nature and Sources of Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

Social cognitive theory explains human behavior with a triadic reciprocal model in which the person, environment, and behavior continuously interact (Bandura, 1978). Self-efficacy, which is a central psychological construct, is not only shaped by environment and past experiences, but also shapes environment and future experiences. To give an overview of the nature and sources of self-efficacy beliefs, it can be maintained that they are developed mainly from four different sources (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1997). Interpreted result of one's purposive performance or mastery experience is accepted as the first and most important source of self-efficacy beliefs, which justifies the contention that successful outcomes raise self-efficacy and that poor outcomes lower it. This stresses importance of successful experience and brings about the pedagogical implication that to increase student achievement in school, educational efforts should focus on altering students' beliefs of their self-worth or competence (See also Schunk, 1985). The second source is the vicarious experience of the effects produced by the actions of others, which is a weaker source of information than interpreted results of mastery experience. Verbal

persuasions form the third source, which is weaker than the first two. Psychological states such as anxiety, stress and fatigue are perceived to be the fourth source of self-efficacy beliefs. These are accepted as the weakest source and apparently affect shallow contextual perceptions rather than deeply-rooted beliefs. The relationship between self-efficacy and such psychological states is two-way; that is, these can also be affected by self-efficacy.

Many researchers have, so far, focused on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, such personal traits as ability, age and gender and other psychological constructs or states such as anxiety, passion and tenacity (e.g. Baum and Locke, 2004; Spicer, 2004; Locke and Latham, 2006; Magogwe and Oliver, 2007 and Çubukçu, 2008). To exemplify the relation of personal characteristics to self-efficacy, Spicer (2004) compared writing self-efficacy beliefs of students with learning disabilities and with those of mainstream students and found that students with learning disabilities had the lowest levels of self-efficacy and lowest writing ability and that mainstream students had the highest levels of self-efficacy with higher writing ability. The same study compared student's essays with their self-efficacy beliefs to identify student matches or mismatches between perceived ability and actual ability and concluded that correlations between student's essays and written English self-efficacy revealed no significant results.

Baum and Locke (2004) clearly described and visualized the dynamic relationship between psychological constructs such as passion and tenacity, personal entrepreneur traits, self-efficacy, goals, communicated vision and venture growth. Going one step further, these variables can well be situated within the framework of experience and visualized as a dynamic cycle of cause and effect relationship. Locke and Latham (2006) studied the relation of goal setting to self-efficacy variance and proposed that "goals, in conjunction with self-efficacy, often mediate or partially mediate the effects of other potentially motivating variables, such as personality traits, feedback, participation in decision making, job autonomy, and monetary incentives" (p. 265). They revealed that self-efficacy influences the level at which goals are set and also that self-efficacy predicts future growth.

Among variables that influence and are influenced by self-efficacy are language, age, proficiency and learning strategies. Mogagwe and Oliver (2007) verify the dynamic relationship between use of language learning strategies, proficiency, level of schooling, which represents age differences, and self-efficacy beliefs, asserting that self-efficacy beliefs mediate type of strategy use and successful language learning. However, they also report mixed findings regarding the correlation between age and self-efficacy. More interestingly, they state that "poor proficiency learners with high self-efficacy use strategies more often" (p. 350).

### **2.3. Self-Efficacy as Predictor of Performance**

Self-efficacy research has so far consistently contended that self-efficacy is a good predictor of performance and/or achievement (Schunk, 1985; Pajares and Johnson, 1996; Pajares, Miller and Johnson, 1999; Pajares and Graham, 1999; Pajares, Britner and Valiante, 2000; Rahemi, 2007). Confirming earlier studies Rahemi (2007) claims that a strong positive correlation exists between students' EFL achievements and their self-efficacy and provides further evidence for the connection between the two variables to justify the significant role of positive self-efficacy as one of the major contributors to second or foreign language success. According to Schunk (1985), the relationship

between performance and self-efficacy is two-way; self-efficacy both affects and is affected by performance or personal experiences, and motivation plays an intermediary role between heightened self-efficacy and enhanced performance. In other words, the relationship between self-efficacy and performance or achievement is not direct; experience-based self-efficacy improves motivation and enhanced motivation leads to higher achievement. Such an impact is not always positive or sought for, though. Negative cases or cases of detrimental effect were also reported in past research (e.g. Whyte, Saks and Hook, 1997). Self-efficacy has a significant effect on motivation to stick to a failing project. That is, the “higher the perceived self-efficacy, the greater the tendency to persist in a failing venture” (Whyte, Saks and Hook, 1997: 427).

Self-efficacy beliefs have the most focal and pervading role in human agency not only at individual level but also at team level (Bandura, 2000; Gibson, 2001). People will not have the incentive to act and they will simply fail to accomplish the desired ends if they do not believe that the goals set for them are attainable and that they have the power or capability to reach their goals. In such cases, persuasion, which is the second most important source of efficacy beliefs, will fall short of motivating an individual or a group of people to take a specific course of action. Ample evidence is provided for example in Gibson’s study (2001) to believe that a direct positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and effectiveness, between training and subsequent self-efficacy, and between training and effectiveness at both individual level and team level.

Quite convinced that there is a direct proportional link between self-efficacy beliefs and performance, researchers propose pedagogical implications for teachers, school administrators and curriculum designers. For instance, Karaway, Tucker, Reinke and Hall (2003) suggest that adolescents with high self-efficacy are more likely to get better grades and be more engaged in various school activities and that school engagement can be improved via enhanced self-efficacy. Drawing implications from the empirical finding that students who have a high degree of self-efficacy tend to attain higher academic achievement, Choi (2005) stresses that importance of learning environment and designing classroom activities in a way that enhance students’ self-concept and self-efficacy. Course activities should be arranged at increasing difficulty levels so as to let students experience and devour the sense of success while completing them. Mills, Pajares and Herron (2007) assert that self-efficacy for self-regulation is a stronger predictor of language achievement than are self-efficacy to obtain high grades, anxiety in reading and listening, and learning self-concept and underline the central role of effective metacognitive strategies to foster self-efficacy and hence language learning success experience.

#### **2.4. Self-Efficacy Belief Change**

Literature on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and performance imply that self-efficacy is prone to change via positive experiences. Moreover, studies that specifically investigate self-efficacy belief change or improvement clearly and consistently argue that self-efficacy beliefs are flexible and subject to development rather than fixed (e.g. Bandura and Schunk, 1981; Lee and Lea, 2001; Chularut and DeBacker, 2004). The core problem is how to develop instructional activities and/or novel applications that will enable students to experience success and re-construct their self-efficacy perceptions.

The work of Bandura and Schunk (1981) is one of the earliest studies to claim that goal setting serves as an effective mechanism for cultivating competencies, intrinsic interest, and self-efficacy beliefs. Lee and Lea (2001) report that online technology use can be

effectively used to improve students' self-efficacy for course content over time and that enhanced self-efficacy for course content and online technologies is a significant predictor of performance. Additionally, it has been reported various applications such as strategy training (Chularut and DeBacker, 2004; Graham, 2007) and concept mapping (Chularut and DeBacker, 2004), and training experiences (Schwoerer, May, Hollensbe, and Mencl, 2005) are proved to have positive implications for the improvement of language proficiency and self-efficacy. Taking a different perspective, Wang and Pape (2007) offer descriptive evidence for associations between self-efficacy beliefs and various factors such as content area expertise, English proficiency self-perceptions, task difficulty level, social persuasion, interest, attitude and context.

Goker (2006), who argues that peer-coaching is an effective way of improving self-efficacy, is of the opinion that the same contention is true for teacher efficacy, too, and believes that "experiential activities such as teaching practica or other mastery experiences seem to have greater impact on teacher efficacy of pre-service teachers (p. 251)". In another study on teacher efficacy, Atay (2007) reports a positive change in teachers' efficacy levels during the course of program. She states that the perception that their performance has been successful raises participant teachers' efficacy beliefs, while initial failures in teaching lower the efficacy beliefs of some of them who encounter a reality shock. Pointing to the cyclical and two-way nature of the relationship between experience and self-efficacy, she argues that greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy.

## **2.5. Mobile Learning and Using Podcasts as Language Learning Objects**

Increasing use of digital technology and affordable portable devices in everyday life has brought about mobile learning (M-learning) as a maturing field of research (Pachler, 2007). Developments in IT and digital technologies have created a new academic ecosystem and have promises for "tomorrow's environment for learning" (Witherspoon, 2005, p. 3). According to Witherspoon "Technology is changing everything from pedagogy to system-wide decision-making" (p. 8). Digital technology has promising potentials for language learning, but this does not mean that it simplifies the process. Novel applications may add new challenges to the complex process of foreign language instruction. According to Yang and Chen (2007) new applications require learners to adopt new learning strategies and teachers to take new additional roles. However, Fischer (1992) argues that new technologies cannot change basic social patterns easily, adding that social roles withstand even widespread innovations. According to Fischer (1997) effects of new technologies can be contradictory, are modest, and they differ from one specific technology to another.

Recent popularization of portable audio and video players and free delivery of digital content in the form of podcasts, which is a compound term coined from "iPod and "broadcast" and which means broadcasting of voice via internet to be played on iPods has promoted mobile learning (Bankhofer, 2005). Podcasting is defined in Wikipedia (February 2008) as "the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio programs or music videos, over the Internet using either the RSS or Atom syndication formats, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers." Cebeci and Tekdal (2006:47) propose that podcasts can be used as effective language learning objects and underline two main features of podcasting: "1. Podcasting is an audio content delivery approach based on Web syndication protocols such as RSS and/or Atom. 2. Podcasting aims to distribute content to be used with mobile and digital audio/video players such as iPods



including all other MP3 players, cell phones and PDAs.” Podcasts are used to learn foreign languages and there is a huge amount of free content on the internet. According to Rosell-Aguilar (2007) the impact of podcasting on language learning is similar to that of the arrival of the Internet. Bausell (2006) claim that pop-culture literacy practices are adopted to radical degrees and stress that the use of podcasting as an alternative means of student expression has significant pedagogical potential. Bausell believes that podcasts can be effective tools to integrate with the target culture and enable students gain a sense of group membership and thus overcome social and psychological barriers such as low self-esteem, anxiety and poor motivation. McQuillan (2006) denotes that learners who listen to podcasts systematically may enter a state of “flow” and temporarily forget that they are listening in a foreign language. Getting into a sense of “flow” is obviously very important for the acquisition of the target language. Based on these earlier studies, the present study aims at analyzing possible influence of language learning podcasts on learners’ self-efficacy perceptions of learning English as a foreign language.

Based on the earlier research findings explained so far, the present study is the first attempt to analyze possible changes in self-efficacy perception due to a course mainly comprised of repetitive listening to podcasts and related tasks. The study moved with the conviction that learning experience affects self-efficacy and we aimed at probing into possible effects of E-learning experience on English self-efficacy. Podcasting and using podcasts in foreign language instruction, on which the present study is based, is a recently developed subfield of mobile learning.

### **3. Research design, sampling and procedures**

This study is based on a non-experimental pretest-posttest research design, in which no control or comparison groups are used and sampling is not random. The rationale behind the choice of such a design, and hence sampling strategy (i.e. convenience sampling), can be justified as follows: in order to treat all the students equally and fairly, the entire target population was chosen as the sampling unit. In other words, as the use of podcasts as language learning objects was expected to bring about positive results in students’ learning, it was believed to be more ethical to include all members of the target population in the research. In other words, the program was a “full-coverage program” and this determined the type of research design to be employed.

To collect quantitative data, 187 first-year students (117 male and 70 female; age range: 18-22) studying at the education faculty of a state university in south-eastern Turkey were taken as convenience sample. All participants had to take a three-hour English course for sixteen weeks. The course entailed using podcasts as language learning objects and doing related task-based activities. The program duration was 16 weeks of study, but 4 weeks were missed due to religious holidays and midterm exams. During the class hours, students listened to three sections of a podcast and did related task-based activities developed by the British Council (Series 01, <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/elementary-podcasts>). All students had the support pack containing transcriptions of podcasts and task-based activities in print form and mp3 audio files of the podcasts in their mp3 players or mobile phones. Throughout the week that followed they were expected and strongly advised to listen to previously studied sections as many times as they could. No coursebooks or any other teaching materials were used so as not to obliterate possible effects of the podcasts. All the participants were given the English Self-Efficacy Scale before week 1 and after week 16 of the program to analyze possible influence of podcasts and related task-based activities on

their self-efficacy perceptions. All the participants had either an mp3 player or a mobile phone.

### 3.1. Data collection tool and analysis procedures

The Self-Efficacy Scale (see Appendix), which was given to students before and after the implementation, focused on students' perceived self-efficacy in learning and using English. According to Bandura (2006, p. 307), "there is no all-purpose measure of perceived self-efficacy". Therefore, the scale must be adapted to the function that is being investigated in a way that all items are relevant. Following from this, the first nine items in the draft of The Self-Efficacy Scale were adopted from Rahemi (2007) and the remaining 21 items were developed by the researchers themselves. The items borrowed from Rahemi (2007) are about self-efficacy perception of learners in learning English as a whole, whereas the items developed by the researchers are specifically designed to gain insight into learners' perceptions concerning their self-efficacy in four main ability domains namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Self-Efficacy Scale also includes a section that collects demographic data about the participants. For piloting purposes, The Self-Efficacy Scale had been given to a different group of 135 students in order to do the factor analysis of the items and improve them further.

In the pilot study, the factor analysis of the scale was carried out and irrelevant items were omitted. Factor analysis of the Self-Efficacy Perception Scale based on data obtained from 135 participants revealed that 30 items included in the scale were divided into four components or factors. The variance covered by these four factors was measured to be 61.461 %, which is quite high. Communalities (common variance) defined for four factors ranged between 0.411 and 0.778. Factor loading values were found to be over 0.45 for all items except one. Depending on factor analysis results, three of the items borrowed from Rahemi (2007) (items 7, 8, and 9) and two other items developed by the researchers (items 11 and 15) were eliminated. Repeated component analysis excluding items that had high loading values for more than one factor resulted in a total variance of 63.804 % and covariance for remaining items ranged from 0.465 to 0.795, which clearly shows that the scale has high construct validity. Item reduction and extraction of unrelated meaningful factors enhanced construct validity of the instrument. Reliability analysis of the instrument showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.94 for pretest results and 0.95 for posttest results, which points to very high reliability. The remaining 25 items were rearranged and given to participants before and after the program to collect relevant data (see Appendix).

Participants' responses to the English Self-Efficacy Scale before and after using podcasts as language learning objects and aids were analyzed with SPSS software. Instead of computing a total score for each participant as was done in earlier self-efficacy studies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation values were computed for responses to each item. This fostered analysis of each self-efficacy item separately. Actually, an initial comparison of whole pretest and posttest scores showed that there was significant difference as a whole. But this was found to be misleading, because it concealed the fact that significant change was not observed for all items.



Pretest and posttest English Self-Efficacy Scale results were analyzed comparatively to see if there was any difference between students' self-efficacy perceptions before and after using podcasts as language learning objects and aids. The English Self-Efficacy Scale data did not show a normal distribution (Table 1), comparative analysis was carried out with Wilcoxon signed rank test, a non-parametric statistical test that is used to compare data from two related samples or repeated measurements on a single sample. Wilcoxon test is used as an alternative to t-test when the population is known to be not normally distributed and it involves comparisons of differences between measurements and requires that the data are at an interval level of measurement.

**Table 1**

*Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test Results for Pretest and Posttest Responses to English Self-Efficacy Scale*

Items	Pretest				Posttest			
	N	M	SD	p	N	M	SD	p
1	183	2,52	,99	,000	175	2,65	1,23	,000
2	186	3,54	1,13	,000	174	3,24	1,15	,000
3	183	3,82	,96	,000	172	3,55	1,00	,000
4	183	1,78	1,01	,000	171	2,25	1,02	,000
5	184	3,91	1,02	,000	164	3,87	,97	,000
6	185	3,82	1,26	,000	173	3,87	1,16	,000
7	186	3,22	1,23	,000	173	2,90	1,27	,000
8	187	2,16	1,12	,000	174	2,25	1,01	,000
9	187	1,79	1,04	,000	172	1,95	,88	,000
10	187	1,88	,99	,000	173	2,14	,97	,000
11	185	1,82	1,07	,000	173	2,17	1,08	,000
12	186	1,68	,90	,000	172	2,01	,86	,000
13	187	1,65	,86	,000	174	1,89	,87	,000
14	187	2,43	1,32	,000	171	2,97	1,27	,000
15	186	1,86	,95	,000	171	2,56	1,13	,000
16	187	2,82	1,43	,000	174	3,30	1,30	,000
17	187	3,30	1,36	,000	172	3,64	1,19	,000
18	187	1,93	1,06	,000	174	2,35	1,14	,000
19	187	1,72	,87	,000	172	2,08	,94	,000
20	187	1,61	,77	,000	167	1,93	,80	,000
21	185	1,99	1,23	,000	172	2,33	1,21	,000
22	185	3,01	1,37	,000	170	3,56	1,18	,000
23	181	2,98	1,39	,000	171	3,65	1,15	,000
24	185	2,45	1,19	,000	174	3,03	1,22	,000
25	187	1,63	,79	,000	173	2,0694	,84622	,000

#### 4. Findings

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was run to compare quantitative data obtained from the first and second administration of the English Self-Efficacy Scale before and after the treatment. The Wilcoxon test was run for each item separately and the results were tabulated. Wilcoxon test results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in participants' perceptions of their listening comprehension skills (Table 2). Mean scores for both pretest and posttest given in Table 2 indicated that the difference was in the positive direction for all items related to listening. Significant positive change was observed not only for simple listening tasks but also for more difficult tasks ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, it is clear that using podcasts as language learning objects and aids had a positive effect on the participants' self-efficacy with regard to listening comprehension.

**Table 2**  
*English Self-Efficacy Perceptions Concerning Listening*

ITEMS	Pair	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
10. If an American or British person speaks to me, I can understand him/her easily.	Pre	187	1.88	0.99	-3.622	0.00
	Post	187	2.14	0.97		
12. When I listen to an English song, I can understand it easily.	Pre	187	1.68	0.90	-5.120	0.00
	Post	187	2.01	0.86		
15. When the teacher speaks English in the class, I can understand him/her easily.	Pre	187	1.86	0.95	-7.428	0.00
	Post	187	2.56	1.13		
20. I can understand English movies and TV series easily.	Pre	187	1.61	0.77	-4.569	0.00
	Post	187	1.93	0.80		
25. I can understand English news programs easily.	Pre	187	1.63	0.79	-6.279	0.00
	Post	187	2.07	0.85		

Participants' self-efficacy perceptions about speaking changed significantly, as well ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3). However, the change in the perceptions about Item 2 (M: 3.54-3.24) and Item 7 (M: 3.22-2.90), which are about future expectations concerning speaking, was in the negative direction. Furthermore, the change in participants' perceptions about speaking English in the classroom (Item 8, M: 2.16-2.25) was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Results for Item 17, Item 19, and Item 23 show that participants' perceptions about simple speaking tasks changed significantly as a result of listening to language learning podcasts and doing related tasks ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3**  
*English Self-Efficacy Perceptions Concerning Speaking*

ITEMS	Pair	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
2. I think that someday I will speak English very well.	Pre	187	3.54	1.13	-3.105	0.00
	Post	187	3.24	1.15		
7. I believe that one day I will be able to speak English with American or British accent.	Pre	187	3.22	1.23	-3.474	0.00
	Post	187	2.90	1.27		
8. If I want to say something in the class, I can say it in English.	Pre	187	2.16	1.12	-1.444	0.15
	Post	187	2.25	1.01		
17. I can talk to a foreigner and introduce myself.	Pre	187	3.30	1.36	-3.290	0.00
	Post	187	3.64	1.19		
19. If a foreigner asks a question, I can reply in English.	Pre	187	1.72	0.87	-4.780	0.00
	Post	187	2.08	0.94		
23. I can introduce me and my family in English.	Pre	187	2.98	1.39	-5.965	0.00
	Post	187	3.65	1.15		

Concerning self-efficacy perceptions about reading, Wilcoxon test results point to statistically significant change for all items but one (Table 4). It seems that participants' self-efficacy perception concerning reading and understanding advanced level stories (Item 9, M: 1.79-1.95) did not improve significantly ( $p > 0.05$ ). Yet, it can be said that overall self-efficacy perceptions about reading improved significantly. Thus, it can be said that the elementary level reading passages and dialogues in the support pack of the podcasts effected students' reading self-efficacy positively.

**Table 4**  
*English Self-Efficacy Perceptions Concerning Reading*

ITEMS	Pair	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
9. I can read and understand advanced level stories.	Pre	187	1.79	1.04	-1.725	0.08
	Post	187	1.95	0.88		
14. I can read and understand easy stories.	Pre	187	2.43	1.32	-5.253	0.00
	Post	187	2.97	1.27		
18. I can read and understand unabridged English texts and newspaper columns.	Pre	187	1.93	1.06	-4.418	0.00
	Post	187	2.35	1.14		
22. I can read and understand simple English dialogues.	Pre	187	3.01	1.37	-5.408	0.00
	Post	187	3.56	1.18		

Self-efficacy perceptions concerning writing improved significantly, as well (Table 5). The significant change was observed for all items ( $p < 0.05$ ). Pretest and posttest mean scores given in Table 5 show that the change was in the positive direction. This significant change is perceived to be due to the writing tasks in the support packs of the podcasts.

**Table 5**  
*English Self-Efficacy Perceptions Concerning Writing*

ITEMS	Pair	N	Mean	SD	Z	p
11. I can write about an event that I have experienced.	Pre	187	1.82	1.07	-4.841	0.00
	Post	187	2.17	1.08		
13. I am very confident about writing in English; I can write long and detailed passages.	Pre	187	1.65	0.86	-2.784	0.01
	Post	187	1.89	0.87		
16. If I had a pen pal, I could write him/her a short letter and introduce myself.	Pre	187	2.82	1.43	-4.519	0.00
	Post	187	3.30	1.30		
21. I can do written chat with foreigners.	Pre	187	1.99	1.23	-4.063	0.00
	Post	187	2.33	1.21		
24. If the teacher says a sentence in English, I can write it correctly.	Pre	187	2.45	1.19	-6.328	0.00
	Post	187	3.03	1.22		

Table 6 shows that participants' motivation and expectation did not improve significantly for all items except for Item 4, which is about current level of English proficiency. Results for Item 4 indicate a positive significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ). Actually, results for Item 3 also show a significant difference, but the difference was not in a positive direction (M: 3.82-3.55;  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6**

*English Self-Efficacy Perceptions Concerning Motivation and Expectations*

ITEMS	Pair	N	Mean	SD	Z	p
1. I have got a special ability for learning English.	Pre	187	2.52	0.99	-1.279	0.20
	Post	187	2.65	1.23		
3. I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English.	Pre	187	3.82	0.96	-3.011	0.00
	Post	187	3.55	1.00		
4. I'm satisfied with my current level of English proficiency.	Pre	187	1.78	1.01	-5.239	0.00
	Post	187	2.25	1.02		
5. I'm sure that I can improve my English by trying more.	Pre	187	3.91	1.02	-.978	0.33
	Post	187	3.87	0.97		
6. If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort.	Pre	187	3.82	1.26	-.486	0.63
	Post	187	3.87	1.16		

## 5. Discussion

Analysis of English Self-Efficacy Scale data indicated that participants' self-efficacy perception of learning English changed significantly for most domains, owing to the course that was based on repetitive listening of language podcasts and doing related tasks. Wilcoxon test results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in participants' perceptions of their listening comprehension skills, speaking, and reading. Self-efficacy perceptions concerning writing improved significantly, as well. These findings support the idea that novel technology-based applications can have positive outcomes for language learning (e.g. Shulman, 2001; Chapelle, 2003; Hamzah, 2004; Yang and Chen, 2007; Meskill and Anthony, 2007; Yamada and Akahori, 2007; Takatalo, Nyman and Laaksonen, 2008). However, participants' self-efficacy perception concerning reading and understanding advanced level stories did not improve significantly. Participants' motivation and expectation did not improve significantly for all items except Item 4, which is about their current level of English proficiency. The finding that participants' self-efficacy perceptions concerning advanced level of proficiency did not improve may be due to the fact that the level of the podcasts and related tasks covered by the program was elementary and that the program duration was insufficient for gaining high self-efficacy for advanced level skills in English. Pajares (1997) implies that self-efficacy does not



improve easily and that people's beliefs in their capabilities must be nurtured while at the same time ensuring that the goal is attainable. According to Pajares (1997), positive persuasions may prove effective to cultivate self-efficacy beliefs, but it is generally easier to weaken self-efficacy beliefs through negative appraisals than to strengthen such beliefs through positive encouragement.

It seems that it is difficult to improve self-efficacy only through positive experience and favorable learning conditions (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1997) because of its relation to diverse personal characteristics. Many researchers have described the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, personal traits such as ability, age and gender, and other psychological constructs or states such as anxiety, passion and tenacity (e.g. Baum and Locke, 2004; Spicer, 2004; Locke and Latham, 2006; Magogwe and Oliver, 2007; Çubukçu, 2008). This clearly shows that self-efficacy perceptions can be highly complex and difficult to change. The fact that some improvement was observed in self-efficacy perceptions related to certain skill domains in the present study is an indication of the positive effect of language learning podcasts and related tasks on language learning outcomes. This is confirmed with previous research (e.g. King, 2009; Lu, 2009; Griffin et al., 2009).

## **6. Conclusion**

Investigating the effect of repetitive listening of podcasts and doing related tasks on English self-efficacy perception was attempted for the first time with this study. Results indicated enhancement of self-efficacy perceptions for all language skills at basic levels. No improvement was observed for advanced level skills because of the fact that podcasts and tasks were elementary level and that course duration was not long enough to bring about positive results for all skills at advanced levels. These results are in line with constructivist theory, which posits that learning is not the result of development, but it is the development itself and changes in beliefs and perceptions are the most important constructs of the developmental process (Janes, 2005). In constructivist theory, learning is seen as a process of meaning making, structuring and re-structuring, and it is not seen as a separate entity independent of beliefs and perceptions. The present study has shown that participants' self-efficacy perceptions have been restructured and improved through a process of positive experiences.

## **7. Implications and future research**

Findings of the study have several implications, the most important of which is that although self-efficacy perceptions can be persistent and difficult to change, it is still possible to improve them by enabling students to experience favorable learning conditions. Most young people are interested in internet-based and mobile applications. Therefore, teachers can make use of such tools to change or improve negative beliefs. Teachers should be aware of the diversity and complexity of self-efficacy perceptions learners bring into the classroom and try to improve or change negative ones by giving them what they really like rather than insisting on conventional materials and techniques that learners usually find boring. Listening to enjoyable authentic input with mobile appliances such as iPods, mobile phones or mp3 players wherever and whenever they like provides students with flexibility in time and location and thus gives them a sense of freedom. This motivates them and enhances performance, which in turn improves their self-efficacy perceptions.

Future research should focus on further investigation of psychological effects of internet-based and mobile tools and try to develop more theoretical backup for the use of podcasts for educational purposes. Possible relationships between listening to podcasts, proficiency, performance, and self-efficacy perceptions can be analyzed, as well. Among other related issues that should be addressed are characteristics and content of podcasts and their effects on cognitive and affective constructs such as language learning beliefs and self-efficacy perceptions. Long term effects of mobile technologies and podcasts can be analyzed through longitudinal and experimental studies.

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**Appendix****English Self-Efficacy Perception Scale (Turkish version that is used in the study)**

<b>İNGİLİZCE ÖZ-YETERLİK ALGISI TESTİ</b>										
Lütfen adınızı yazmayınız ve aşağıdaki her bir ifade ile ilgili gerçek duygularınızı dürüstçe belirtiniz.										
<b>Her bir madde ile ilgili yanıtınızı aşağıdaki beş seçenektan birine X işareti koyarak veriniz:</b>										
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>						
<b>Kesinlikle katılmıyorum</b>	<b>Katılmıyorum</b>	<b>Fikrim yok</b>	<b>Katılıyorum</b>	<b>Kesinlikle katılıyorum</b>						
<b>Madde:</b>						<b>X koyunuz</b>				
1	İngilizce öğrenme konusunda özel bir yeteneğim var.					1	2	3	4	5
2	İngilizce akıcı bir şekilde konuşabilecek kadar öğrenebileceğime inanıyorum.					1	2	3	4	5
3	İngilizce öğrenirken karşılaşılabileceğim sorunları aşabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
4	Şu andaki İngilizce düzeyimden memnunum.					1	2	3	4	5
5	Biraz daha çabalarsam, İngilizce'mi geliştirebilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
6	İngilizce öğrenme konusunda başarısız olursam, nedeni yeterince çaba göstermememdir.					1	2	3	4	5
7	Bir gün İngilizce'yi İngiliz ya da Amerikan aksanıyla konuşabileceğime inanıyorum.					1	2	3	4	5
8	Derste söylemek istediklerimi İngilizce konuşarak söyleyebilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
9	İleri seviyedeki İngilizce hikayeleri okuyup anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
10	Bir İngiliz ya da Amerikalı benimle İngilizce konuşursa onu kolayca anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
11	Başımdan geçen bir olayı İngilizce yazarak anlatabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
12	İngilizce şarkıları dinlediğimde onları rahatlıkla anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
13	İngilizce yazma konusunda kendime çok güveniyorum; uzun ve ayrıntılı yazılar yazabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
14	Basit İngilizce hikayeleri okuyup anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
15	Öğretmen derste İngilizce konuştuğunda, onu rahatlıkla anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
16	Yabancı bir mektup arkadaşım olursa, ona kısa bir mektup yazıp kendimi tanıtabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
17	Bir yabancı ile İngilizce tanışabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
18	Orijinal (basitleştirilmemiş) İngilizce metinleri ve gazete yazılarını okuyup anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
19	Bir yabancıyla sorabileceği her soruya İngilizce yanıtlar verebilirim.					1	2	3	4	5
20	İngilizce film ya da dizileri rahatlıkla anlayabilirim.					1	2	3	4	5

21	İnternette yabancılarla yazılı chat yapabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Basit İngilizce diyalogları okuyup anlayabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
23	İngilizce konuşarak kendimi ve ailemi tanıtabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Öğretmenin derste söylediği İngilizce cümleleri doğru şekilde yazabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
25	İngilizce haber programlarını kolayca anlayabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5