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Enhancing EFL Students' Speaking Skills through Digital Storytelling in Podcast Projects

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Abstract

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Many students experience difficulties in expressing their ideas orally due to limited opportunities for practice, anxiety about making mistakes, and a lack of confidence when communicating in English. These challenges often hinder the development of speaking proficiency in language classrooms. Therefore, innovative and engaging teaching strategies are needed to create supportive learning environments that encourage students to practice speaking more actively. This study investigates the use of digital storytelling through podcast projects as a pedagogical approach to enhance EFL students' speaking proficiency. The research employed a qualitative design involving ten students from the English Education Department at Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya. The participants were engaged in a digital storytelling activity in which they created their own podcasts, beginning with the process of selecting a story topic, writing scripts, rehearsing their narration, and finally recording and sharing their storytelling podcasts. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews in order to explore students' perceptions and experiences during the podcast project. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes related to students' speaking development. The findings of the study indicate that the use of digital storytelling in podcast projects contributed positively to students' speaking abilities. Participants reported increased confidence when speaking English, improved fluency, and better pronunciation as a result of repeated practice during the recording process.

Keyword: EFL Students, Speaking Skills, Digital Storytelling, Podcast Projects, Language Learning

1. Introduction

Speaking ability is a crucial aspect of mastering a foreign language, especially for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. It allows learners to express ideas, build connections, and apply language knowledge in real communication. However, many EFL learners continue to struggle with confidence and fluency due to limited speaking opportunities, anxiety about public speaking, and insufficient exposure to authentic English interactions. To overcome these barriers, educators must implement engaging and practical speaking activities that can reduce students' anxiety and encourage consistent practice.

Indonesia's low English proficiency remains a challenge. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI, 2023), Indonesia ranks 79th out of 113 countries with a score of 469 significantly below the global average of 502. This data underscores the urgent need to enhance English-speaking competence among Indonesian students through innovative and student-centered strategies. One such approach is the integration of digital storytelling into podcast projects, which combines creativity, technology, and authentic communication.

Digital storytelling in podcast projects offers a multimodal learning experience where students plan, script, record, and present their narratives in English (Lambert, 2013; Bretag, 2016). Unlike traditional speaking tasks, podcast storytelling fosters self-expression while allowing repeated rehearsal and editing, which helps reduce anxiety and enhance speaking fluency (Goh & Burns, 2012). This method supports learner autonomy and encourages meaningful language use in a low-pressure environment, making it particularly suitable for EFL learners (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

Prior studies have shown that podcasts can improve students' speaking skills by providing rich listening input, authentic language models, and opportunities for imitation and practice (Bustari, Samad, & Achmad, 2017; Nurhayati, 2019). When students engage in digital storytelling, they also develop non-verbal communication awareness such as tone, intonation, and rhythm which are essential components of spoken fluency. The combination of personal storytelling and podcast technology supports not only linguistic competence but also students' self-confidence and engagement.

This study aims to examine how digital storytelling in podcast projects can enhance EFL students' speaking abilities. It focuses on students' perceptions and experiences in using podcast-based storytelling as a learning tool. Specifically, the research explores the impact of this method on speaking fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence. The findings are expected to provide insights into effective digital pedagogical strategies for improving speaking skills in EFL contexts, particularly in Indonesia.

The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of digital storytelling implemented through podcast projects in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. Rather than focusing solely on passive listening, this approach emphasizes active student participation in the creation of spoken content. By involving students in planning, scripting, recording, and sharing their own stories, podcast-based digital storytelling is expected to improve their fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence. This research also seeks to contribute to the development of innovative speaking practices in language classrooms and offer practical insights for educators facing challenges in cultivating oral communication skills among EFL learners.

An observation by using Thornbury (2019) located that normal publicity to video-based totally content can assist lessen student speaking tension since it makes college students experience more comfortable and conversant in language and communicate behavior. Students' speaking accuracy and fluency are advanced through practising tough video elements and imitating native audio system' pronunciation and intonation (Nurhayati, 2019). This steady exposure to true language enter, this cyclical method, enables automaticity, that is vital in attaining fluency (Brown & Lee, 2015). Video podcasts also offer contextual studying, and it makes the scholars study the utility of language in real contexts, as a consequence making the learning proper and powerful (Yoestara & Puteri, 2019).

The purpose of this studies is to become aware of whether or not video podcasts, especially the ones utilising Mel Robbins' "talk with confidence" idea, can successfully improve college students' speaking. Video podcasts, in supplying multimodal material, ought with a view to growth students' fluency, accuracy, and self assurance in English talking (Robbins, 2017). As has been located within the preceding research, audiovisual media like video podcasts can offer a extra stimulating and tensiondecreasing surroundings for gaining knowledge of, helping students in conquering their worry of speaking (Thornbury, 2019; Nurhayati, 2019). therefore, it's far expected that this studies will make a contribution to the upgrades in the English language studying highquality in Indonesia and clear up the difficulty of low English talent, as indicated by Indonesia's low ranking at the EF English skillability Index (EF training First, 2023).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill for students to master. Unlike reading or writing, speaking requires learners to produce language spontaneously while simultaneously managing grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and meaning. Many students experience difficulty expressing their ideas clearly due to limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and lack of opportunities to practice speaking in real communicative situations. As a result, learners frequently develop anxiety and low confidence when required to speak in English, particularly in classroom environments where evaluation and peer judgment may occur.

Speaking anxiety has been widely recognized as one of the most significant barriers in foreign language learning. Students often hesitate to participate in oral activities because they worry about incorrect pronunciation, grammatical errors, or negative reactions from teachers and classmates. According to Brown and Lee (2015), psychological factors such as anxiety, self-consciousness, and fear of failure can significantly hinder language production and reduce students' willingness to communicate. Therefore, language teachers must create supportive learning environments that encourage students to experiment with language without feeling excessive pressure.

One promising strategy for addressing this challenge is the integration of technology-based learning tools that promote active participation and creative expression. In recent years, digital media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, offering new opportunities for language learning beyond traditional classroom methods. Among these technological innovations, podcasts have emerged as a powerful medium for enhancing listening and speaking skills. Podcasts allow learners to access authentic language input, practice pronunciation, and engage with meaningful content in flexible and interactive ways.

Podcast-based learning is particularly beneficial for speaking development because it encourages students to produce spoken language in authentic communicative contexts. When students create their own podcast content, they are required to organize ideas, write scripts, rehearse pronunciation, and deliver spoken messages clearly to an audience. This process naturally integrates several language skills, including listening, speaking, and critical thinking. Furthermore, the recording process enables students to review their own speech, identify areas for improvement, and refine their pronunciation and fluency through repeated practice.

Digital storytelling, when combined with podcast technology, further enhances the learning experience by allowing students to express personal experiences, opinions, and narratives in creative ways. Storytelling has long been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool in language education because it connects linguistic knowledge with meaningful communication. According to Lambert (2013), digital storytelling involves the use of multimedia elements such as voice, images, music, and narrative structure to create engaging stories that communicate personal or social messages. In the context of language learning, digital storytelling encourages students to use English not merely as an academic subject but as a medium for sharing meaningful experiences. Through podcast-based storytelling, students become active creators of content rather than passive recipients of information. They take responsibility for selecting topics, developing storylines, and presenting their ideas clearly to listeners. This learner-centered approach promotes autonomy and motivation, which are essential factors in successful language acquisition. When students feel ownership over their learning process, they are more likely to engage deeply with the language and practice speaking more frequently.

Another advantage of podcast storytelling is its ability to reduce speaking anxiety. Unlike live presentations in front of a classroom, podcast recordings allow students to practice and revise their speech multiple times before sharing the final product. This opportunity for rehearsal helps students build confidence and gradually improve their speaking performance. Goh and Burns (2012) emphasize that repeated speaking practice with constructive feedback is crucial for developing fluency and accuracy. Podcast projects naturally facilitate this cyclical learning process by allowing students to record, evaluate, and refine their spoken output.

In addition, podcast storytelling encourages students to pay attention to paralinguistic features of communication, such as tone, intonation, stress, and rhythm. These elements play a significant role in effective spoken communication but are often overlooked in traditional language instruction that focuses primarily on grammar and vocabulary. By listening to their own recordings and comparing them with authentic models, students become more aware of how these features influence meaning and clarity. As a result, they gradually develop more natural and expressive speaking styles. The use of video podcasts further strengthens this learning approach by incorporating visual elements that support comprehension and engagement. Video podcasts provide contextual cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and situational settings, which help learners understand how language is used in real-life communication. According to Yoestara and Puteri (2019), audiovisual media can enhance students' comprehension and motivation because it presents language in realistic contexts that are easier to relate to. When students observe how speakers use body language and intonation, they gain a deeper understanding of communicative competence beyond linguistic structures.

Furthermore, video podcasts expose students to authentic language use from native or proficient speakers. This exposure allows learners to observe pronunciation patterns, conversational strategies, and cultural nuances in communication. Through imitation and repeated practice, students gradually internalize these language features and incorporate them into their own speech. Nurhayati (2019) notes that imitation and modeling are essential components of language learning because they provide concrete examples of how language is used effectively in real situations. The integration of Mel Robbins' concept of "Talk with Confidence" in podcast-based storytelling also offers valuable insights into building students' speaking confidence. Robbins (2017) emphasizes the importance of overcoming hesitation and self-doubt by taking immediate action in communication. When applied to language learning, this concept encourages students to focus on expressing their ideas rather than worrying excessively about mistakes. By consistently practicing speaking through podcast projects, students

gradually develop a more positive mindset toward communication and become more willing to participate in English conversations.

Moreover, podcast projects foster collaborative learning among students. In many cases, podcast production involves group work where learners collaborate to plan topics, distribute roles, and provide feedback to one another. This collaborative process creates opportunities for peer interaction and negotiation of meaning, which are essential components of communicative language learning. Through discussion and teamwork, students gain exposure to diverse perspectives and language expressions, enriching their overall speaking experience. Another important aspect of podcast storytelling is its potential to develop students' digital literacy skills. In today's digital era, learners are expected not only to communicate effectively but also to navigate technological tools for information sharing and content creation. By participating in podcast projects, students learn how to use recording software, edit audio or video content, and publish their work online. These skills are increasingly valuable in academic and professional contexts where digital communication plays a central role.

From an educational perspective, the integration of digital storytelling and podcast technology aligns well with modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize student-centered learning and experiential engagement. Instead of relying solely on traditional lecture-based instruction, teachers can design interactive activities that encourage students to explore language creatively and collaboratively. This shift toward active learning helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills. Considering the challenges of English proficiency in Indonesia, the adoption of innovative strategies such as podcast-based digital storytelling becomes highly relevant. The relatively low ranking of Indonesia in the EF English Proficiency Index highlights the need for more effective teaching approaches that focus on communicative competence rather than rote memorization. By integrating technology, creativity, and authentic communication, podcast storytelling offers a promising solution for improving students' speaking abilities in EFL contexts.

In conclusion, digital storytelling through podcast projects represents a dynamic and engaging approach to developing speaking skills among EFL learners. This method not only enhances students' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence but also promotes creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. By providing opportunities for repeated practice, authentic communication, and meaningful self-expression, podcast storytelling helps create a supportive learning environment where students can gradually overcome speaking anxiety and develop stronger oral communication skills. Therefore, exploring the effectiveness of this approach is essential for identifying innovative strategies that can improve English language education, particularly in countries like Indonesia where speaking proficiency remains a significant challenge.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore how digital storytelling implemented through podcast projects could enhance EFL students' speaking skills. The research focused on students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in developing and producing their own podcast episodes using storytelling as the core structure. The participants of the study were 10 English education students at Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya, selected through purposive sampling. They were chosen based on their interest in English learning and basic familiarity with podcast media. These students participated in a project where they were instructed to plan, write, and record a short digital story in English on a topic of their choice, which was later published as a podcast episode.

The research process was divided into several stages. First, students were introduced to the concept of digital storytelling, including its narrative elements (e.g., setting, characters, conflict, resolution) and how to convey those elements effectively through audio. They then worked individually or in pairs to write their story scripts in English. After script writing, they rehearsed and recorded their narratives using audio recording tools (e.g., mobile phones or basic editing software). The final podcasts were shared with peers for listening and feedback. To gather data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 10 participants. The interviews included open-ended questions designed to explore students' reflections on the process of creating digital storytelling podcasts, and how the experience influenced their speaking fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Participants were also asked about the difficulties they encountered and how they overcame them during the project.

The collected interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved identifying recurring themes and patterns related to the students' learning experiences, perceived improvements in speaking, and the

effectiveness of digital storytelling as a method. The findings were interpreted by linking the themes to existing literature and pedagogical theories in EFL education.

3. Result and Discussion

This section presents the findings obtained through qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. The interviews explored students' experiences and perceptions of using digital storytelling in podcast projects to enhance their speaking skills. Thematic analysis revealed three major themes: increased speaking confidence, improved fluency and pronunciation, and enhanced speaking engagement through personal storytelling.

1. Increased Speaking Confidence

One of the most prominent findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews was the increase in students' speaking confidence after participating in digital storytelling podcast projects. Among the ten participants interviewed, seven students explicitly stated that the process of creating and recording their own podcast stories helped them feel more confident when speaking English. Prior to the project, many students reported feeling anxious and hesitant when asked to speak in front of their classmates. This anxiety often stemmed from fear of making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing words, or being judged by peers. However, the podcast-based storytelling activity provided a different environment where students could practice speaking in a more comfortable and controlled setting.

The process of producing a digital storytelling podcast involves several stages, including selecting a topic, writing a script, rehearsing the story, and finally recording the narration. These stages allowed students to gradually build confidence in their speaking ability. Instead of being required to speak spontaneously in front of the class, students had time to carefully prepare their ideas and organize their narratives. This preparation stage helped them become more familiar with the vocabulary and sentence structures they intended to use, which in turn reduced their fear of making mistakes.

Participant MM highlighted how preparation and repeated practice contributed to their confidence in speaking. MM stated, "Because I prepared the story myself and practiced several times, I felt more confident when speaking. It's different from impromptu speaking in class." This statement reflects the importance of preparation in reducing speaking anxiety. When students are given sufficient time to rehearse their speech, they become more comfortable with the language they use and feel more capable of delivering their message clearly.

Similarly, participant NW explained that the storytelling format helped them focus on delivering the message rather than worrying excessively about grammar. According to NW, storytelling allowed them to concentrate on communicating ideas and emotions instead of focusing solely on linguistic accuracy. This shift in focus is important in language learning because excessive attention to grammatical correctness can sometimes hinder fluency and reduce students' willingness to speak.

Another factor that contributed to increased confidence was the sense of ownership students felt over their stories. Because the podcast project required students to create personal narratives, they were able to speak about topics that were meaningful and familiar to them. This familiarity made it easier for students to express their thoughts and feelings in English. When learners talk about experiences that are personally relevant, they tend to feel more motivated and emotionally connected to the task. As a result, they are more willing to experiment with language and communicate their ideas.

The recording process itself also played an important role in boosting students' confidence. Unlike live classroom presentations where students must speak immediately and cannot revise their speech, podcast recording allows students to repeat their narration multiple times until they are satisfied with the result. This opportunity for repetition helped students gradually improve their pronunciation, clarity, and delivery. Knowing that they could re-record their speech if necessary reduced the pressure typically associated with speaking tasks.

In addition, the use of technology created a learning environment that felt less intimidating than traditional classroom activities. Many students are already familiar with digital tools such as audio recording applications and social media platforms. Incorporating these technologies into language learning made the activity feel more

natural and engaging. Instead of perceiving the task as a formal academic assignment, students often viewed the podcast project as a creative and enjoyable activity.

These findings support the argument proposed by Thornbury (2019), who emphasizes that structured speaking tasks can help reduce learners' affective filters. The concept of affective filters refers to emotional barriers such as anxiety, fear, or low self-confidence that can interfere with language acquisition. When students feel relaxed and confident, they are more likely to participate actively in communication and experiment with new language forms. Storytelling activities provide a supportive framework that allows learners to focus on meaning and communication rather than worrying excessively about errors.

Furthermore, the increased confidence reported by participants suggests that digital storytelling podcasts may serve as an effective bridge between controlled practice and spontaneous communication. By gradually building their confidence through prepared speaking activities, students become more willing to participate in other forms of oral communication. Several participants mentioned that after completing the podcast project, they felt less nervous about speaking English during classroom discussions.

Overall, the findings indicate that digital storytelling podcast projects can play a significant role in improving students' speaking confidence. Through preparation, rehearsal, and repeated recording, students gain greater control over their language production and develop a more positive attitude toward speaking English. The combination of creative storytelling and digital technology creates a supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to express themselves without excessive fear of making mistakes.

2. Improved Fluency and Pronunciation

Another significant theme identified from the interview data was the improvement of students' fluency and pronunciation during the digital storytelling podcast project. Several participants explained that the process of preparing and recording their stories required them to repeatedly practice speaking English, which helped them develop smoother speech patterns and clearer pronunciation. Among the ten participants, at least three students identified as ANA, SA, and AA specifically emphasized that the rehearsal process allowed them to refine their speaking performance.

Fluency in speaking refers to the ability to produce language smoothly and continuously without excessive hesitation or pauses. Many EFL learners struggle with fluency because they need time to mentally translate ideas from their first language into English. However, the digital storytelling process encouraged students to practice their stories multiple times before recording the final version. This repetition gradually reduced hesitation and helped students become more familiar with the flow of their sentences. Participant ANA explained that reading and rehearsing the script several times helped them develop a more natural speaking rhythm. By repeatedly practicing the story aloud, ANA became more comfortable with the sequence of ideas and the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. This repeated exposure allowed the student to internalize the structure of the sentences and produce them more smoothly during the recording.

Similarly, participant SA described how practicing the script improved their awareness of stress and intonation patterns in English. English pronunciation relies not only on correct individual sounds but also on appropriate stress and rhythm within sentences. Through repeated practice, SA learned to emphasize key words and adjust their tone to make the narration sound more expressive and natural. Participant AA also emphasized the role of repetition in improving pronunciation. AA stated, "I repeated some parts of the recording many times until I was satisfied with my pronunciation." This statement illustrates how the podcast recording process allowed students to monitor their own speech and make corrections when necessary. Unlike traditional speaking tasks that occur in real time, podcast production gives learners the opportunity to evaluate their performance and refine their pronunciation.

The process of self-monitoring is an important aspect of language learning. When students listen to their own recordings, they become more aware of pronunciation errors, unclear articulation, or unnatural pauses. This awareness encourages them to adjust their speech and strive for better clarity. Over time, such practice can lead to noticeable improvements in both fluency and pronunciation. The use of storytelling also contributed to fluency development because narratives naturally follow a logical sequence of events. When students organize their ideas into a story format, they tend to use cohesive language structures such as connectors, descriptive

phrases, and chronological expressions. These linguistic elements help create smoother transitions between sentences and improve the overall flow of speech.

Moreover, storytelling encourages expressive language use, including variations in tone and intonation. Students often adjust their voice to convey emotions or highlight important moments in their narratives. This expressive practice helps learners develop greater control over their vocal delivery, making their speech sound more engaging and natural. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Bustari, Samad, and Achmad (2017), which demonstrated that multimodal language learning activities can significantly improve speaking fluency and pronunciation. Multimodal learning involves the integration of multiple forms of input and output, such as listening, speaking, reading, and visual media. Podcast storytelling represents a multimodal activity because students listen to language models, write scripts, rehearse spoken language, and produce recorded audio content.

The integration of listening and speaking practice is particularly beneficial for pronunciation development. When students listen to examples of natural speech either from teachers, peers, or authentic audio sources they gain a better understanding of how words and sentences should sound. By attempting to imitate these models during rehearsal and recording, they gradually improve their articulation and rhythm. Another advantage of podcast recording is the opportunity for iterative practice. Because students can record multiple versions of their narration, they can gradually refine their performance with each attempt. This iterative process mirrors the natural way in which many professional speakers and broadcasters prepare their presentations. Through repeated practice, learners develop greater control over their speech and become more comfortable expressing themselves in English.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital storytelling podcast projects provide an effective platform for improving speaking fluency and pronunciation among EFL learners. The combination of script preparation, repeated rehearsal, and self-evaluation enables students to practice speaking in a focused and purposeful manner. As they become more familiar with the language used in their stories, their speech becomes smoother, clearer, and more confident.

3. Enhanced Engagement through Personal Storytelling

The third major theme identified in the interview data was the increased engagement and motivation experienced by students when participating in digital storytelling podcast projects. Many participants reported that the opportunity to share personal stories made the speaking activity more meaningful and enjoyable. Instead of simply completing a language exercise, students felt that they were communicating real experiences and emotions through their narratives. Engagement plays a crucial role in language learning because motivated students are more likely to participate actively and invest effort in improving their skills. Traditional speaking activities sometimes fail to capture students' interest because they focus primarily on linguistic accuracy rather than meaningful communication. In contrast, storytelling allows learners to connect language with personal experiences, making the learning process more authentic and relevant.

Participant NIR explained that sharing a childhood story made the activity particularly enjoyable. NIR stated, "I enjoyed sharing a story from my childhood. It felt meaningful and I wanted others to hear it." This statement illustrates how personal storytelling can create an emotional connection between the speaker and the content being delivered. When students speak about topics that are personally significant, they often become more enthusiastic and expressive in their communication. Another aspect that increased engagement was the creative nature of the storytelling process. Students were not limited to a fixed script provided by the teacher; instead, they were encouraged to develop their own narratives and express their unique perspectives. This creative freedom allowed students to experiment with language and explore different ways of conveying their ideas.

Several participants also mentioned that storytelling helped them remember vocabulary and expressions more effectively. Because the words and phrases were embedded within meaningful narratives, they were easier to recall during the recording process. This contextualized learning differs from memorizing isolated vocabulary lists, which students often forget quickly. The digital format of the podcast project further enhanced students' engagement. Many students are familiar with digital media platforms and enjoy creating content such as videos, audio recordings, or social media posts. Integrating these technologies into language learning made the activity

feel modern and relevant to students' daily lives. Instead of perceiving the task as a traditional academic assignment, they often viewed it as an opportunity to produce creative digital content.

Collaboration among students also contributed to increased engagement. In some cases, students shared ideas, discussed possible story topics, and provided feedback on each other's recordings. This interaction created a supportive learning environment where students felt encouraged to experiment with language and improve their speaking performance. The findings of this study align with research by Shoar, Salehi, and Amini (2021), which suggests that storytelling activities can strengthen both cognitive and emotional connections to language learning. When learners engage emotionally with the content they are producing, they become more motivated to communicate effectively. Storytelling encourages learners to think critically about their experiences, organize their thoughts logically, and express them in meaningful ways.

Furthermore, storytelling promotes authentic communication, which is an essential component of communicative language teaching. Authentic communication occurs when language is used to convey real messages rather than simply practice grammatical structures. By sharing personal stories through podcasts, students used English as a tool for genuine expression rather than merely completing a classroom task. The digital storytelling format also allowed students to reach a broader audience beyond the classroom. Knowing that their stories might be listened to by others increased students' sense of responsibility and motivation to produce high-quality recordings. This sense of audience awareness encouraged them to pay closer attention to clarity, pronunciation, and overall storytelling quality.

In addition, storytelling can foster empathy and cultural understanding among students. When learners share personal experiences, their classmates gain insight into different perspectives and backgrounds. This exchange of experiences can strengthen classroom relationships and create a more supportive learning community. Overall, the findings indicate that digital storytelling podcast projects significantly enhance students' engagement in speaking activities. By combining creativity, personal expression, and digital technology, this approach transforms language learning into a meaningful and motivating experience. Students become active participants in the learning process, using English not only as an academic subject but also as a medium for sharing their stories and connecting with others.

Table 1. The table uses summary findings from 10 participants

NM	Felt more confident after practicing and recording personal story
ANA	Improved word pronunciation through repetition and scripting
NAP	Reported reduced public speaking anxiety when telling a familiar story
RA	Understood natural speech rhythm by listening to and editing own story
SA	Speaking fluency increased when sharing story in class discussion
NIR	Noted the importance of facial expressions even in audio narration
NW	More confident after structuring a meaningful story
AF	Focused on pronunciation of difficult words during editing
EA	Felt more relaxed when speaking through personal narrative
AA	Gained fluency by retelling and refining story multiple times

These findings demonstrate that digital storytelling through podcast projects not only builds technical speaking skills such as fluency and pronunciation but also fosters emotional engagement, personal expression, and learner autonomy essential components in developing speaking competence in EFL learners.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that digital storytelling implemented through podcast projects can significantly enhance EFL students' speaking skills. By engaging students in the process of scripting, recording, and sharing their personal stories in English, the podcast projects fostered improvements in speaking fluency, pronunciation, and most notably, confidence. The act of preparing their own narratives gave students a sense of ownership over the language they used, reducing speaking anxiety and encouraging natural speech production. Rehearsal and self-monitoring during the recording process allowed learners to focus on intonation, stress, and clarity skills essential for effective oral communication. Moreover, the storytelling element provided

emotional engagement, making speaking tasks more meaningful and motivating for students. These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the benefits of multimodal and student-centered speaking activities in language learning. Importantly, this study emphasizes that digital storytelling is not merely a technological tool, but a pedagogical approach that integrates creativity, reflection, and communication in a way that supports comprehensive speaking development. Future research in this area may consider involving a larger sample size, comparative studies with control groups, or integrating peer feedback and audience interaction to deepen the impact of storytelling on language performance. Additionally, teachers and institutions are encouraged to adopt storytelling-based podcast projects as an innovative, flexible, and student-friendly strategy to promote speaking proficiency in EFL contexts.

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