

Scaffolding EFL Oral Performance through Story Maps and Podcasts and Students' Attitudes toward it

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Abstract

The present study sought to explore the impact of story maps and audio podcasts as scaffolds on oral proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. The quasi-experimental study was launched with 36 EFL undergraduates in three groups by adopting a counterbalanced 3×3 Latin squared design. All participants were indiscriminately, but in a specified order, exposed to the three treatment conditions of story retelling, story retelling plus story map, and story retelling plus podcast, and post-tested sequentially. The Latin square analysis of the oral assessment scale showed statistically meaningful differences under the treatment conditions for the groups. The post-hoc test also showed overachievements of the participants under the treatment conditions of story retelling plus story map and story retelling plus podcasts. The performance under podcast condition was significantly better than performances under the story map and short story conditions. The post-experiment opinion survey showed the learners' preferences for and positive attitudes towards podcast and story map as scaffolds in developing EFL oral proficiency. The participants welcomed integration of the scaffolds into EFL speaking courses.

Keywords: Scaffolding, Story map, Podcast, Oral Proficiency, Story-retelling, Attitude

Introduction

Developing oral proficiency has long been an issue of considerable attentions, rigorous explorations, and methodological debates in applied linguistics (Richards, 2008; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Brown, 1994, 2007; Brown & Yule, 1983, to name a few). The long-lasting interest has been accelerated with the advent of the communicative tradition and importance of speaking as the acid test of one's command over a second language. Our present understanding of ESL speaking should find itself indebted to advances in corpus linguistics, (spoken) discourse analysis, and studies of (non)verbal features of interactive communication (Richards, 2008). The current view regards speaking a dynamic, interactive skill whose development requires sustained efforts, contextual practices, and goal-oriented instructions in a communicative, stress-free context through authentic input (Richards, 2008; Shumin, 2002; Omaggio, 1986). Providing such a condition is definitely a preoccupation of learners and teacher. However, the basic questions here are: What tasks suit their communicative purposes more effectively? How much do the current speaking practices reflect this perspective on speaking?

Concerning the practices, the interactive-communicative scenario in EFL situations oftentimes represents a horse of a different color from that of ESL condition because of comparatively limited opportunities in the former context for natural, authentic, and goal-oriented use of language. The limitations make greater demands on the EFL teacher to make up for the lack of instances of real, interactive language use by employing more real-life, communicative-based tasks. In other words, the EFL instructor has to look for ways to gear communicative tasks to learners' needs, that is, to scaffold instruction to meet the communicative-interactive criterion. Development in a scaffolded instruction, to use Vygotsky's term, results from combined, and collaborative efforts of the teacher (the knower) and the learner (the novice) under the solicited assistance (scaffolding) of the more knowledgeable other for the learner to gain independence, and self-expression in the meantime (Daniels, 2007; Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002).

Scaffolding may take various configurations. Two forms of such practices, one as old as history and the other a brand new web tool, with the potentials to develop and consolidate EFL oral proficiency, are story maps

and story podcasts. Stories and storytelling are now established pedagogic activities integrated into the Iranian mainstream EFL curriculum for universities. The course '*Oral Reproduction of Short Stories*' (ORSS) embodies realization of such integration as ORSS is designed for learners' smooth transition from teacher-assisted, semi-controlled speech to unassisted and independent oral communication (Birjandi, 1998). While ORSS instructors oftentimes agree to differ on instruction and assessment procedures, the prospective sophomore students disagree on their roles, the course objectives, and expectations from their instructors. Scaffolding speaking instruction via story map practices might ease the burden by providing the context and goal for pedagogical activities.

The fast-moving web tool of podcast is the other useful aid with the same potentials for scaffolding oral proficiency. These media files have reportedly crossed various academic disciplines, yielding promising results in literacy programs, teaching science and technology, and second language education (Amer, 1992; Adler, 2001; Holtz & Hobson, 2007; Palmer & Devitt, 2007; Salmon & Edirisingha, 2008). Theoretically, story maps and podcasts can set the ground for more collaborative practices, active learners' participations, naturalistic exposure and modeling of input, and closer learner-learner and learner-instructor interactions (Long, 2002).

Storytelling is perhaps the oldest of art that has withstood the test of time (Chambers, 1970). Bruner (1990) regards the negotiation and renegotiation of meaning through narrative as one of "the crowning achievements of human development" (p. 67). Narrative to Miller, Fung, and Koven (2007) is a "universal tool of meaning making" whose sphere of influence has crossed the domains of education, language socialization, cultural psychology, and ESL/EFL education (as cited in Keith, 2011, p. 596). Concerning the pedagogical benefits, storytelling, according to Zaro and Salaberri (1995), can contribute to natural, contextual presentation. Cooper (1989) asserts that storytelling can contribute to "the development of listening skills, the acquisition of new vocabulary, the development of literary competence, the communicative exchange embedded in stories, motivating, stimulating and developing imagination" (p.5). In an investigation on the role of narrative intelligence in EFL learning,

Pishghadam and Motakef (2012) found a significant correlation between narrative intelligence and academic achievements of English, Farsi, and Arabic Iranian students. Stimulating the learners' interest and promoting communication are also cited as advantages of stories in ESL curriculums (Zaro & Salaberri, 1995; Baumann & Bergeron, 1993; Hendrickson, 1992). Emphasizing the need for a plan to help learners get under the skin of stories (and non-fiction texts), Adler (2001) counts "monitoring, metacognition, answering and generating questions, recognizing story structure, and organizers" as its comprehension boosting techniques (Readingrockets, para. 5, n.d.).

A story map is recognized as a graphic and visual organizer for charting the key linguistic, organizational, textual, and conceptually related elements of a text (Amer, 2003; Willis, 2002; Vacca & Vacca, 1999). Consequently, it may be considered as a strategy to map out the story line in terms of characters, setting, problem, and solution in both mainstream literacy programs and second language education (Reutzel, 1985). Story maps may assume slightly different configurations; however, their key components are nearly the same. Inspired by the proposals by Schmidt and O'Brien (1986), Cooper (1986), and Willis (2002), and incorporating more consensual ingredients of a story, we devised a scheme as a framework for this study to specify the story features the learners had to single out, as shown in Figure 1.

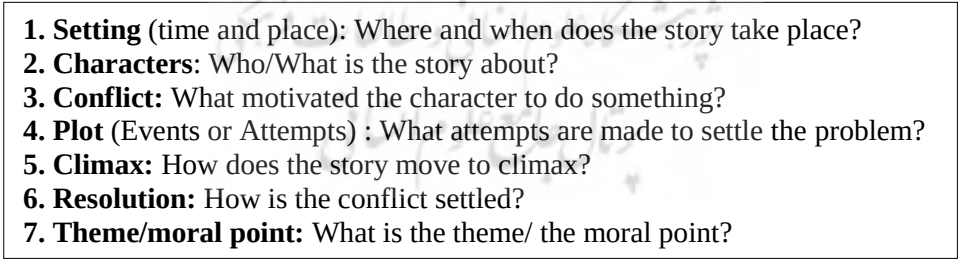
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1. **Setting** (time and place): Where and when does the story take place?
 2. **Characters**: Who/What is the story about?
 3. **Conflict**: What motivated the character to do something?
 4. **Plot** (Events or Attempts) : What attempts are made to settle the problem?
 5. **Climax**: How does the story move to climax?
 6. **Resolution**: How is the conflict settled?
 7. **Theme/moral point**: What is the theme/ the moral point?

Figure1

A schematic representation of the components of a story map

Based on his study in 1992, Amer (1992) concluded that story map practices help EFL students follow sequences of the events, comprehend meta-structure of the text, develop a story schema, and find the main ideas.

Some researchers recommended additions of guiding questions to a story map for highlighting the story line and improving text comprehension as well (Beck, 1984; Burns et al., 1999; Leu & Kinzer, 1995). The digital technology has elevated story-based practices to a more versatile educational tool. According to Amer (1992), *Inspiration* (software for adults and adolescents) and *Kidspiration* (software for younger learners) are typical examples of this pedagogical aid. Similarly, Rossetier and Garcia (2010) argue that digital storytelling

has become an emerging pedagogical tool for educators from many fields working with students of all ages, educational backgrounds, and ethnicities. The significance of digital storytelling is rooted in the narrative tradition, enhanced by the multidimensionality afforded by the digital context. (p. 42)

Overall, digital storytelling is believed to have the advantages of being learner-centered, enjoyable, contextual, and useful for learning digital skills, effective for developing listening and critical thinking abilities (Jenkins & Lonsdale, 2008; Young & Chu, 2012)

One of the relevant concepts is podcast. Podcasting refers to “a radio show or any audio-based object such as narrative, lecture, individual or group presentation that is made available through the World Wide Web” (Mellor, Kotter, & Oosthoek, 2012, p.117). The term Podcast was used to refer to an audio file on a portable media player in 2004 (Copley, 2007). It has gained public attentions due to versatility, ease of accessibility, portability, play back speed controllability, potentials for multitasking, flexibility, and distant learning possibility (Heilesen, 2010; Holtz & Hobson, 2007; Islam, 2008; Palmer & Devitt, 2007; Salmon, Edirisingha, Mobbs, & Dennett, 2008; Thorne & Payne, 2005). Academic podcasts have a multi-functional capability for being supplemented, substituted, or integrated with course books, accessing authentic input, contextualizing idiomatic language use, and facilitating intercultural understanding (Heilesen, 2010; Stanley, 2006). Copley (2007) considers podcasting “an extension of the now-common practice of providing electronic versions of

slides used in lectures, either as PowerPoint files or pdf handouts” (p. 390). A study in Iranian context by Shahramiri and Gorjian (2013) supported the Effect of podcast transcription activities on writing accuracy of advanced EFL learners.

Awareness and use of podcasting is on the rise across various disciplines in universities (Hew, 2008; Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2010; Zanten, Somogyi & Curro, 2012, for example). While the increase rate has soared from 22% in 2006 to 45% in 2010 (Webster, 2010), some researchers complain of poor literature on academic podcasts, dearth of rich podcasts for L2 programs, lack of longitudinal studies on the technology (Lazzari, 2009; King & Gura, 2009; Heiesen, 2010). Categorically, ESL podcasts are of three types: audio, video, and enhanced media files (Salmon, et al. 2008, p.11). Concerning contents, Harris and Park (2008) classify podcasts into ‘teaching oriented’, ‘service oriented’, ‘marketing oriented’ and ‘technology oriented’ types (pp. 548-550). ESL learners have found teaching oriented categories worthwhile for authenticity of input, revision of materials, and oral-aural practices while teachers have appreciated them for efficient and economical management of their class time (Constantine, 2007; Facer, Abdous & Camarena, 2009).

The research evidence on the use of academic podcasts generally support integrated and supplementary applications of the media in education (Copley, 2007; Evans, 2008; Herrington & Kervin, 2007; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Walls et al., 2010). In a study with the undergraduates in the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the instructors ran the classes routinely synchronizing lectures with power point presentations the first year while podcast-only-delivered lectures were employed the second year. Parrish (2008) reported an improvement of 10% in the exam scores in year 2 and a double outperformance on essay type examinations. Comparing the efficacy of supplemental versus integrated use of podcasts in ESL classes with lower and higher level students, Abdous, Facer and Yen (2012) reported an inconclusive relationship in the learning outcome for integrated use but a strong connection between the achievements and supplementary use of podcasts. Some researchers have found podcasts effective for correct pronunciation in Spanish, French, and German as second languages (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Lord, 2008). Chan, Chen, and Döpel (2008) also

emphasized the contributory role of podcasts in developing positive attitudes toward a second language.

Evidently, podcasts and story maps are pedagogically effective techniques or strategies. The theoretical underpinnings and, to a lesser degree, empirical evidence justify to regard these tools as scaffolds in harmony with Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding and socio-cognitive developments. If we take scaffolding as "assisting the learner in this recognition, interpreting discrepancies and finally confirming the learner's individual achievement" (Murray & McPherson, 2006, p. 139), the distance in the learner's present and potential level of cognitive ability (or the zone of proximal development) may be filled under the instructor's support and collaboration via story maps and podcasts. Scaffolding, according to Lange (2002), may be realized through behavior modeling, explanations, asking for participation, checking learners' comprehension, and asking for learners' clues. Of the *conceptual* scaffolds (for anchoring and organizing idea), *specific strategic* scaffolds (for asking more specific questions) and *procedural* scaffolds (for doing presentation tasks), developed by Kao, Lehman, and Cennamo (1996), story maps and podcast may be thought of as procedural and strategic types as well.

The typical scenario for teaching speaking in ORSS courses follows a more or less rigid procedure: assigning one short story each week; calling upon some students to retell it next session; recording the uttered errors of all types for later reference; and finally evaluation and grading. The evaluation is often subjective; authentic language is rarely expected; and feedback is limited to correct/incorrect forms uttered. Under this condition, a scaffolding-based approach benefiting the podcast technology and story map assignments may serve the course goal of developing oral proficiency better. In this approach, the instructor and the textbooks are still the sources of input, but incorporating out-of-class sources of audio podcasts and story maps as scaffolds may assist the learners perform the oral task with more confidence, and ease. The story-map development demands critical and deep cognitive ability, and the podcast functions as a mentor for correct speech. The scaffolds may provide a better context for the ultimate course objective, that is, free communication.

To examine the feasibility of podcasts and story maps as scaffolding tools to enhance EFL speaking skill, the following questions were formulated:

1. Does scaffolding through story-map practices improve Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill?
2. Does listening to short story podcasts contribute to significant development of Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill?
3. Does scaffolding speaking through story maps and short story podcasts contribute to the development of more positive attitudes in learners?

Method

Participants

Initially, a sample of 42 juniors studying English Literature and English-Persian Translation (males=12 and females=30, aged 19-28) from Khayyam University of Mashhad (a city in northeast of Iran) participated in this study. During the experiment, 6 subjects did not attend all the sessions and were excluded; thus, the study sample eventually turned out to be 36. Since true random sampling selection and assignment of the participants to groups was unfeasible, three naturally occurring groups of EFL students in three ORSS classes formed the study sample. To compensate for this delimitation, the researcher decided for all the groups to function as both experimental and control groups in a kind of repeated measure within groups ANOVA, known as Latin square design.

Instrumentation

Based on the scales of Grove and Brown (2001) and the Council of Europe (2001), the researchers devised a Likert-scaled rating checklist of 16 items for evaluating speaking with minimum and maximum scores of 16 to 80. The first draft of the scale went through scrutiny of four experienced raters for revisions, and approval. Its Cronbach's alpha value was .81, a relatively high index of consistency. The other instrument was an opinion measure with 18 dichotomous yes-no items (9 for story map and 9 for podcasting). The measure went through the scrutiny of the four experts before administration and the reliability value for it was .71.

Procedure

All the participants studied an assigned short story each week and were called upon randomly to retell it by paraphrasing, summarizing, role-playing, and reciting phrases from it. The short story was the icebreaker as it contextualized the exchange of ideas in a natural, collaborative, and communicative way. The groups in turn, as specified by Latin square design, received the three treatment conditions. The learners received the required orientation on what a story map is, how to detail specifications for it, what a podcast is, how to download and use it before the experiment. The audio podcasts were downloadable from the researchers' blog (www.mpazhou.ir) and loadable on mobile phones for retrieval and practice. Each treatment condition lasted five weeks during which the data on oral presentations for the groups were being collected. The audio presentations were recorded for objective scoring and inter-rater reliability. The study concluded with a survey of the attitudes on the scaffolds used and their likely contributions to a more enjoyable learning experience.

Design

The research design was counterbalanced, quasi-experimental, allowing for each group to function as the control and experimental groups and compensating for the likely initial group differences. The participants received different orders of the treatment conditions to cancel out the carryover and order effects on the experimental condition. There were three treatment conditions including 1) short story per se (STR); 2) short story plus story maps (STM); and 3) short story plus story podcasts (POD). The final study design was a 3×3 Latin Square within-groups analysis, as diagrammatically represented in Table 1 below:

Table1

Diagrammatic representation of counterbalanced Latin square design for the study groups

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Group A	STR	STM	POD
Group B	STM	POD	STR
Group C	POD	STR	STM

Results

The descriptive statistics for the experiment, as listed in Table 2, indicated the highest mean gains for the POD treatment ($\bar{X}$ = 67.50; SD= 4.17) and the lowest score for short story condition T($\bar{X}$ =59.756; SD= 4.42).

Table2

Descriptive statistics for the groups gains on the study measure

Treatments	N	$\bar{X}$	Md	V	SD	Min.	Max.	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
POD	36	67.50	67	17.45	4.17	61	78	17	.70	.22
STM	36	64.36	64	23.95	4.89	53	73	20	-.15	.43
STR	36	59.75	60	19.56	4.42	53	69	16	.24	-.75

As indicated in Table 2, the skewness for the POD and STM map variables (and partially for STR variable) were near zero, an indication of normality. The kurtoses for the dependent variable in groups were less than 3. The test of normality, shown in Table 3, was non-significant, that is, the p values for both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were greater than .05.

Table3

Tests of Normality for the distribution of score

Treatments	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
POD	.13	36	.20*	.95	36	.13
STM	.11	36	.20*	.96	36	.28
STR	.098	36	.12*	.96	36	.22

The graphical distribution of mean scores across groups (Figure 2) also showed a steady increase in gains within and between the groups. The slope within each group was nevertheless gentle and due to the treatment conditions.

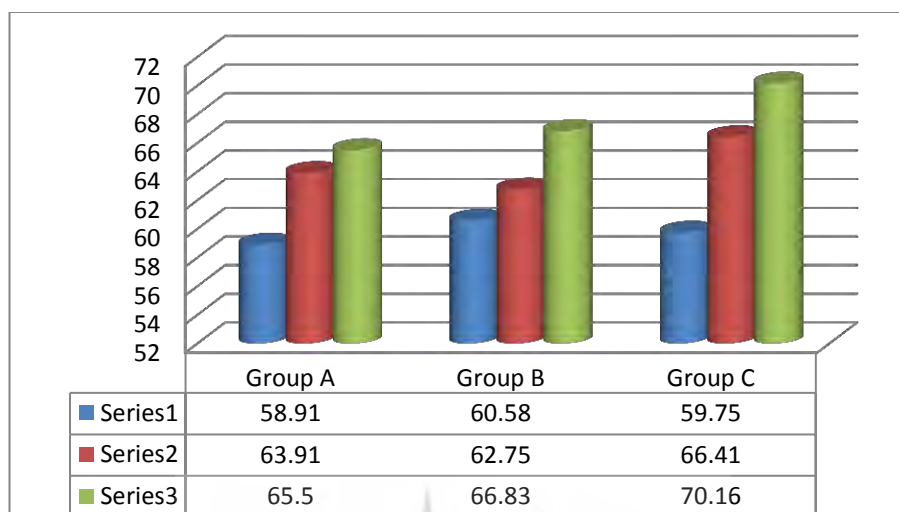


Figure2

Bar graph for the mean scores of group on dependent variables

All subjects in the counterbalanced designs had received equal number of treatments within their groups to diminish the distinction between experimental and control groups. The results of the analysis of variance, displayed in Table 4., showed a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in oral proficiency for the treatment factor, $F(2, 108) = 27.83$. This finding allowed for rejection of the null hypothesis for the treatment effects. Scrutinizing the groups gains on the dependent variable revealed that the comparison by group means was not significantly different ($G_A = 62.77$; $G_B = 63.38$; $G_C = 65.44$, with non-significance of .32). This finding allowed the researchers to attribute all performance changes to the treatment effects. The eta squared value turned out to be .02, a small effect size according to Cohen (1988). Overall, the univariate analysis showed differences in performances and positive impact of the treatments on speaking skills.

Table4

Results of test of between-subjects effects for treatments and groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1242.94 ^a	6	207.15	10.53	.000
Intercept	440577.81	1	440577.81	22414.59	.000
Row(Groups)	140.51	2	70.25	3.57	.32
Column	8.29	2	4.14	.21	.81
Treatment	10994.13	2	547.06	27.83	.000
Error	1985.24	101	19.65		
Total	443806	108			

To trace where exactly the difference was, the post-hoc Tukey HSD indicated that the participants responded differently to each single treatment ($p < .05$). The mean for STR treatment ($\bar{X} = 59.75$) was significantly different from the means for STM ($\bar{X} = 64.36$) and POD conditions ($\bar{X} = 67.50$). However, the difference of means for STM and POD conditions was smaller. The significant mean differences for STR treatment against POD and STM treatments, as listed in Table 5, were 7.75 and 4.61, respectively. The mean difference for podcast and story map treatments was 3.13 and smaller, though significant.

Table5

Results of Tuckey HSD comparisons of groups on the study measure of oral proficiency

(I) Treatment	(J) Treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
STM	STR	4.61*	1.04	.000	2.12	7.09
	STR	7.75*	1.04	.000	5.26	10.23
POD	STM	3.13*	1.04	.009	.65	5.62

*. 0.05 level of significance.

Concerning the questionnaire, the participants generally had a positive attitude towards the two scaffolds. As indicated in Table 6, some participants had no familiarity with STM ($n=26$; 72%), and POD ($n= 23$; 63%). Some also had no prior practice with STM ($n=28$; 78%) and POD ($n= 20$; 56%). Regarding the role of the scaffolds, the students believed that they

were effective for both comprehension and speaking (n=28; 78% for story map; n= 20; 56% for podcast). Approximately, 65% of the participants believed the treatments assisted their recall and retention. More than 60% regarded STM and POD necessary for speaking courses (about 70%). Overall, except for the first two items, the other questions were judged contributory to oral language ability. Table 6 illustrates the frequency and percentage for the questionnaire items.

Table 6.

Frequency counts and percentage for the questionnaire items

Items		STM		POD	
		F	%	F	%
Did you have known what a STM/POD is before?	No	26	72	23	64
	Yes	10	28	13	36
Did you have any prior experience with STM/POD?	No	28	78	20	56
	Yes	8	22	11	24
Did you find STM/POD useful for language skills?	No	8	22	16	44
	Yes	28	78	20	56
Did you find STM/POD useful for comprehension?	No	7	20	14	39
	Yes	29	80	27	75
Are STM/POD necessary for the course?	No	10	28	9	25
	Yes	26	72	27	75
Did STM/POD help you be more organized?	No	11	31	14	39
	Yes	25	69	23	61
Did STM/POD help you recall information better?	No	12	33	13	36
	Yes	24	67	23	64
Did STM/POD help you be motivated for learning?	No	13	36	13	36
	Yes	23	64	23	64
STM/POD help you save time and learn more quickly?	No	10	27	8	22
	Yes	26	73	28	78

Concerning the reliability estimate, Cronbach's formula showed the value of .71 for the opinion measure, an acceptable, though a bit low, index of consistency despite few number of items and respondents.

Table 7

Reliability values for questionnaire items

Cronbach's Alpha	N	
STM	0.69	9
POD	0.73	9
Overall	0.71	18

Discussion

This study tended to explore the effects of scaffolding instruction via audio podcasts and story maps on EFL speaking skills of Iranian students. The data analysis revealed that both experimental interventions brought about significant outperformance while the traditional story retelling setting showed no difference in learning outcomes. Therefore, the answers to the first and second questions, which inquired about the effects of STM and POD on oral performance, are positive. The performance under podcast treatment showed the highest gain scores and hence greater impact of POD scaffold. Concerning the last research question, most Iranian EFL learners in universities were unfamiliar with STM and POD resources. The opinion scale showed practice with the scaffolds could develop a positive attitude towards EFL speaking course in learners. The students expressed their interests in POD and STM practices and the results showed the learners interested in the new pedagogical experience. The findings are consistent with the reports in the literature on the contributory effects of POD and STM in enhancing academic performance in general and second language education (Copley, 2007; Nei, et al., 2010; Parson, 2007; Adler 2001) in particular.

The significant differences can be interpretable in light of Vygotsky's view of zone of proximal development and Schmidt's noticing hypothesis. Exposing the learners to the scaffolds would give them the chance of rapid and smooth transfer from dependent to autonomous, unassisted speaking. The STM and POD practiced provide good language models in developing speaking. Obviously, this is a tangible and immediate need in EFL situations, where fewer instances of language use are available.

Schmidt's noticing hypothesis emphasizes that the input needs to become intake for efficient learning and that this transformation occurs

through noticing or attending to a new linguistic form. Schmidt (2001) argues that "noticing requires of the learner a conscious apprehension and awareness of input," and "while there is subliminal perception, there is no subliminal learning" (p. 26). The results of this study find congruity with noticing theory. Noticing discourse features such as gambits, phatic expressions, cohesive devices, and conversational maxims as well as naturalistic and contextualized language features would become more noticeable to the learners via podcasts and story maps. Story maps are of special utility to EFL literature majors since such practices require detecting linguistic and literary keys in the text, a prerequisite to efficient comprehension and literary appreciation.

Previous research has shown that multimedia has provided the chance for more appealing and motivating learning-teaching contexts (Cheung On Tam, 2012; Nozari & Siamian, 2015). In the opinion of the students in the study, the scaffolds can contribute to enhanced motivation for developing oral proficiency: the majority of students expressed the need to supplement the speaking classes with these resources as scaffolds. Concerning typologies, story podcasts may be viewed as "supplementary teacher driven" type as they have a supporting learning role concerning core-learning materials (Lee & Chan, 2007 as cited in Tam, 2012). A corollary of this perspective is that they are not cure-alls for every EFL learner, nor are they substitutes for more traditional teaching techniques. Rather, they are versatile scaffolds to complement traditional resources and to contextualize the procedure of teaching speaking skills.

Learners in academic locations generally favor a technology-rich, digital and online learning environment (Lee et al. 2008; Salmon & Edirisingha, 2008; Abt & Barry, 2007 as cited in Kemp 2012). Clearly, integrating speaking courses with the software packages to create STM and employing authentic language via POD will have more educational pay-off, particularly in EFL situations. This need has been addressed by Tohill (2008) who notes that podcasts are used most frequently in fields of engineering and science (33.3%), computer and information technology (33.3%), business and law (13.3%), whereas in others areas, especially arts learning, the applicability rate is quite small.

The experience of the EFL juniors in ORST classrooms in the study confirms that scaffolded approach to learning is a compelling way to engage students in developing speaking. Both POD and STM are powerful tools to complement traditional resources as the majority of students rated POD pedagogically useful, a finding in support of the previous evidence by Copley (2007) and Evans (2008). Podcasts can offer flexibility in teaching and learning, supporting a diverse student population through their university experience (Salmon & Nie, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2009). Moreover, the experience of teaching has informed educators that learners need more naturalistic, communicative contexts if maximum participations and efforts to develop oral EFL proficiency are desired. Overall, the pool of evidence indicates that story map and podcasts practices can theoretically and practically assist not only the teacher but also the learners to fulfill the objectives of the course, that is, development of EFL learners' oral language proficiency.

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