<u>*Research Article*</u>

A Specific Implementation of Reflective Journals in Self-Regulating Academic Presentation Skills[*]

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Abstract

Reflection journal writing is recognized as an effective learning activity in facilitating learners' self-regulative skills and abilities and their academic performance in the literature. It is evident that self-regulation is of vital importance in learning. Hence, this study aims to investigate self-reflective journal writing on university students' self-regulation strategies in a scope of academic presentation and speaking course. An exploratory mixed-method research design was adopted. The participants were selected with convenience sampling method and included 94 undergraduate students studying at a prominent English-medium instruction public university. The data was collected through an online questionnaire, and students' reflections on the 'Reflection Journal' task, which aimed to develop their awareness of the strategies that work for their own learning. Students were assigned to videotape their two main presentations during a required language course, and to keep a journal to reflect on certain points predetermined by the course instructor. The study aims to both investigate the perceptions of students about self-regulated learning in presenting, and the effectiveness of the journal task in promoting their learning. The findings indicated that the majority of students benefited from the task which helped them to reflect on their own micro-level presentation skills. This study concluded that reflective journal keeping could facilitate students' self-regulation and learning performance when developing academic presentation skills.

Keywords: Self-regulated learning, reflection journal, academic presentation skills, self-regulation

1. INTRODUCTION

As Bayraktaroğlu (2017) puts it 'when we encourage students to focus on the process of learning rather than the outcome, we help them consciously examine their own contribution to their learning' (Scharle & Szabo, 2000), which is called 'self-regulation'. This practice is defined as the composition of "self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (Zimmerman, 2000, p.14). It refers to various ways to monitor, control, and regulate learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). Self-regulation exists as an ongoing activity (Pintrich, 2000). It is defined as an active, constructive process in which students set goals for their learning based on past experiences within the contextual features of the current environment (Pintrich, 2000). Learners with self-regulation skills and behaviours are "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process" (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 329). They direct their own efforts and learn to acquire knowledge and skills without depending on any other member of instruction. Zimmerman (2000) defines self-regulation in three stages; namely, forethought (before), performance or volitional control (during), and self-reflection (after) phases. The *forethought* phase includes task analysis and self-motivational beliefs, the second performance or volitional control referring to self-control and self-observation, and the final one is where students experience *self-reflection* which includes self-judgement and self-reaction.

In the literature there are different definitions of self-regulation, but the most common one promotes the use of different cognitive and metacognitive strategies to control and regulate one's own

learning (Pintrich, 1999). Self-regulation is of vital importance due to its critical role in the learning process and hence to student success (Shea, Hayes, Smith, et al., 2013). The current study sought to reveal a specific implementation of self-regulation in the learning process called the Reflection Journal. The '*Reflection Journal'* designed and evaluated in this study aims to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. Learners can underachieve if their learning activity is not 'scaffolded' by a task that would change their attitude to performing it better, because they risk perceiving their abilities as stable. By writing about their weaknesses and strengths and monitoring the strategies they could or could not employ, anticipations about future performances, by reflecting on their achievements and failures, their personal goals, students were expected to develop specific strategies to be able to give effective presentations. The rationale behind the design of the task was mainly to assist their problem-solving efforts in their own presentation skills. The assumption behind this rationale is that students who can make use of a reflection task in their own skills development process, are easily influenced by extrinsic factors, whereas students better at self-regulation are 'self-starters, strategic learners, and self-reactive to task performance outcomes, they are 'self-motivated, they plan their learning and develop self-monitoring strategies' (Deci, 2009).

Since metacognitive theories of learning attribute great importance to supportive learning environments to achieve success (Paris & Byrnes, 1989), the students of the aforementioned presentation skills course were assigned to observe themselves paying deliberate attention to aspects of their own behaviour, and accordingly develop individual learning strategies with the aid of keeping their Reflection Journal. Students were given prompts as to guide them to anticipate and predict their performance before, during and after a presentation. They were asked to compare their behaviour with their goals, which is especially important because 'the belief that one is making progress enhances self-efficacy' (Çubukçu, 2009).

1.1. Literature Review

Little (2007) in his article quotes Holec emphasizing the importance of students' having control in their own learning when he states that 'when the learner himself determines the goals and content of the learning objectives, universal knowledge is replaced by subjective, individual knowledge.' He also adds that only then, the learner, himself constructs and dominates his reality. Yet, especially, in the Turkish education system, where learners are not traditionally given a surplus of opportunities to be in charge of their learning, there is resistance to going outside the traditional passive role that the school assigns them. It is not common for students to have personal agendas. However, actually, 'it is in our nature to be autonomous' (Little, 2007, 17). 'Autonomy is one of the three basic needs that we must satisfy in order to achieve a sense of self-fulfilment' (Deci, 1996, p. 2). Deci supports this argument by claiming that our feeling of competence is achieved when we successfully confront and overcome challenges. Applied to the contexts of formal learning, students must be given tangible opportunities to achieve the little challenges they set for themselves, so that they are motivated (volitional) for prospective ones. Teachers should also consider the fact that students' autonomy will be undermined if they do not feel that their effort is paying off' (Little, 2007).

When lacking the skills to look back and reflect in retrospect, students will fail to self-regulate, as it is less likely that they become responsive to their own performances and skills. Hence, the major cause of failure in learning is believed to be 'lack of self-regulation'. Underachievers have difficulty assessing their abilities and being self-critical (Borkowski & Thorpe, 1994). Therefore, self-efficacy -personal beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform skills- is not realized, intended learning does not take place, and teachers end up grading students' already present proficiency rather than their achievement, which would eventually even make formative tests totally redundant, and unreliable.

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Bruner (1986, p. 132) defines the autonomous learner as one that has a capacity for reflective intervention; that is instead of having to control students all the time, students should have a stance and develop strategies to "penetrate knowledge for their own use; share and negotiate the results of their penetrations". Helping learners adopt such roles in their own learning is the teacher's job today since both what the Council of Europe in the English Language Portfolio, and the constructivist theories suggest is the design of learner centred tools in language education for 'school knowledge' to become what Barnes (1976) calls 'actual knowledge'. So, what can we do to train learners to take responsibility of their own learning? Apparently, teachers should cooperate with learners to accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial for progress (Scharle & Szabo, 2000).

Learners whose intellectual capacity and creativity are enhanced, enjoy learning mainly because their thinking skills are engaged. Hence, the aim of education on the large scale is or should be to raise thinkers. Good thinkers are autonomous learners, and autonomy in learning comes with monitoring one's progress closely and employing the cognitive strategies to survive in changing circumstances. Hence, rethinking over one's own performance and benefiting from this practice is 'self-regulated learning' and simply 'the control over students' thinking to affect their behaviour' (Çubukçu, 2009). But, how does one foster these aforementioned abilities? There are a thousand ways to guide learners to reflective thinking, yet what can teachers do to integrate a self-scrutinizing activity specifically in their contexts? Apparently, to that end, planning tasks for courses and eventually constructing courses that would gear up to students' needs is a must for students to steer their own progress. Thus, instruction should set forth the rules to follow to achieve autonomy and self-regulation in learning. Kent (1997) and Moon (1999) promote journals as vehicles of self-evaluation.

Through a review of the literature, the application of reflection journal writing can be seen in different disciplines. Mak and Wong (2017) refer to the benefits of keeping portfolios in developing self-regulation to empower students in their control of their own learning process. Likewise, Gleaves, Walker and Grey (2008) focused on reflective journal writing as diary writing with students on information and communication technology, and they determined that reflection journals facilitate understanding and controlling learning. Reflection journals are identified to be effective learning activities in promoting learners' thinking about their own learning in nurse education as well (Thorpe, 2004). McCrindle and Christensen (1995) studied the impact of reflection in student journals on cognitive ability and academic performance in a biology course. They concluded with the finding that keeping journals improved learners' academic performance and cognitive ability. In a later study, Lew and Schmidt (2011) evaluated whether reflection journal writing is effective in promoting self-reflection, academic performance, and learning of undergraduate students, and they indicated the benefits of reflection journals' in enhancing learners' self-reflection, academic performance, and learning to some extent. In a more recent study, Al-Rawahi and Al-Balushi (2015) similarly found positive effects of reflective journal writing on students' self-regulation strategies in a science course. With this purpose in mind, this study designed a self-reflective journal writing activity in an academic speaking and presentation skills course.

The research conducted in this study investigates the effectiveness of a self-reflection journal, a self-regulation scaffolding instrument, designed to make students, to reflect on their own learning process. In having them keep a 'Reflection Journal'- students were asked to reflect on their own learning process. They were required to keep it throughout the semester and to update it after their presentations in class. With the specifically designed task being a required one in the course, it was intended that students would look thoroughly at their personal goals and objectives when presenting, and critically elaborate on the factors prone to have an effect on their performance, observe the individual outcomes of their presentation performance, and write down a reflection. The journal task was intended to make students 'think over' their thinking and learning to be able to 'take over' their thinking and learning, because it is an undeniable fact that there is a correlation between

metacognition (their thinking on their thinking) and self-regulation in the process of learning. That is to say performance-oriented tasks, if short term strategies are developed, can lend themselves to 'self-scrutiny' so that one can come up with, especially, short term survival strategies. Hence, the current study aims to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of the task, the Reflection Journal, designed to investigate the effectiveness of the reflection journal in the Academic Speaking Skills course on the participants' self-regulated learning skills. Specifically, two research questions guide this study:

- What are students' perceptions on the effectiveness of the reflection journal on regulating their learning?
- How does the reflection journal contribute to students' self-regulated learning skills?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design which is defined by Creswell and Plane Clark as "a procedure for collecting, analysing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem (2011, p.535, as cited in Creswell, 2012). With a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data, a better understanding of the research problem that is being studied and a more complete picture of the phenomenon occurs (Fraenkel, Wallen, Hyun, 2012). Therefore, this type of design; though being time-consuming is stronger than other research where only one type of data is collected. It should be noted that this type of design is not solely collecting two types of data, rather collecting two types of data and then merging, linking, and integrating them. For this reason, mixed-method research is more popular and common in educational research (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel, et al., 2012). From the types of mixed-method research designs, the current study uses an exploratory design in which researchers begin with qualitative data to explore a phenomenon, and then collect quantitative data to explore relations inside it (Creswell, 2012).

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2.2. Research Context

Academic Speaking Skills course is a required course offered to students of all the departments to enhance students' speaking and academic presentation skills. Students taking the Academic Speaking Skills course are expected to give three main presentations throughout the semester, and one as the final exam of the course, at the end of the semester. Instructors' main role when providing input and feedback through out the course is to facilitate the process of self-regulation so that students can benefit from analyses of their process of learning.

The template form that the students could use if they wanted to for their entries, and the guiding questions can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2. The loosely structured rubric which was shared with the students much before they wrote their journal entries is in Appendix 3. Some students made an animated video of their journals and shared their reflections publicly which can be seen on the Journal Playlist of the course supplementary materials channel on YouTube (http://bit.ly/2i42Q4t). Therefore, except for those students who did not prepare an animated video (a total of 33 students), made entries on the Reflection Journal.

2.3. Participants of the Study

The set of participants in the study were mostly second year students from various departments who were taking the compulsory Academic Speaking Skills course offered by the Department of Modern Languages at a well-known public university in Turkey. The participants included 94 undergraduate students, selected based on the convenience sampling method, a type of nonprobability sampling method based on the criteria of being readily available, accessible, and willing to participate (Creswell, 2012). They were informed about the aim of the research, and that

their participation was voluntary. Thereafter students were encouraged to fill out the online questionnaire.

Of the 94 students who responded to the online survey, most of them ($n = 55$, 59%) were male whereas the remaining ($n = 39$, 41%) were female. They were from different disciplines including the Faculty of Engineering ($n = 55$, 5%), Arts and Sciences ($n = 24$, 26%), Economy and Administrative Sciences ($n = 9$, 10%), and the Faculty of Education ($n = 6$, 6%). The diverse background of the participants enhances the generalizability of the findings.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments and the Procedure

The data was collected through a survey, which was self-developed, specifically for this particular research aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of keeping a Reflection Journal task in promoting self-regulated learning skills. While designing the survey, a short form of Online Self-regulated Learning Questionnaire (Barnard, Lan, To, Paton & Lai, 2009) was adapted to suit the aim and scope of this study. The questionnaire includes a total of 20 items, two on demographics, and the remaining 17 on self-regulated learning skills used in writing the Reflection Journal, in addition to the questions on the effectiveness and function of the journal in promoting self-regulated learning skills, and the last question is an open-ended one for any extra comments. The questions were then reviewed by three experts to provide credibility. A total of 94 students responded to the online survey.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data was analysed particularly based on descriptive statistics. There is only one reverse item (item-12) in the survey, therefore it was reverse coded in the analysis process. The analysed data was accumulated to find out the effectiveness of the Reflection Journal and how it promoted students' self-regulated learning skills. To this end, participants' entries on the Reflection Journal were also examined to triangulate the quantitative data; however, a normal qualitative coding was not done. The entries on the Reflection Journal were checked and examined according to which and how they fit or match with cyclical phases of self-regulation that thoroughly guide the current study. The next part provides the findings of the study.

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3. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics referring M as mean score, and SD as standard deviation about the survey items are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Each word of the table subtitle should be in lower case (Font size:10)

Likert Type Items	Mean	SD
1. I know what is expected from me in my Reflection Journal.	4.2	0.84
2. I set goals for my presentations.	4.1	0.76
3. I keep a high standard for developing my presentation skills.	4.1	0.74
4. I set goals to help me manage my timing when presenting.	4.1	0.86
5. I am aware of my weaknesses and strengths in presenting.	4.5	0.58
6. I am aware of what kind of distracters to ignore when I am presenting.	4.1	0.82
7. I know the ideal physical setting to prepare my presentations.	4.1	0.88
8. I know how to determine my comfort zone in a presentation setting.	3.9	0.89
9. I record my presentations to see my weaknesses and strengths after the presentation.	2.6	1.56
10. I make notes right after my presentations to be able to write my reflection journal.	2.8	1.48
11. Writing the reflection journal entry makes me more aware of what to avoid in my next presentation.	3.9	1.02
12. I write my reflection journal without a deep analysis of my presentation because it is time-consuming.	2.7	1.20
13. I try to write the journal entry on the same day I present so that I don't forget the details about how my presentation went.	2.2	1.22
14. I share my feedback with my classmates if they ask me about the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation.	3.4	1.19

15. When I am writing my reflection journal, I find it helpful to ask for my friends' feedback on my presentation.	3.2	1.25
16. I make use of the rubric of the presentation when writing my reflection journal.	4.0	1.03
17. I make use of the journal questions when writing my reflection journal.	3.9	1.06

N=94

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest mean score belongs to the item-5 'I am aware of my weaknesses and strengths in presenting', which is very critical for any learner during the learning process. The second highest mean score belongs to the first item which is 'I know what is expected from me in my Reflection Journal'. The lowest mean score is for item-13 'I try to write the journal entry on the same day I present so that I don't forget the details about how my presentation went', followed by item-9 which is 'I record my presentations to see my weaknesses and strengths after the presentation'.

Considering the first research question which concerns students' perceptions of self-regulated learning in academic presenting, items numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 14 were asked. The majority of students, 81% ($n = 76$) stated that they set goals for their presentations which is thought to be the first step in regulating one's learning. Also, 79% ($n = 74$) declared to keep a high standard for developing their presentation skills. Moreover, 75% ($n = 71$) said that they set goals to help them manage their time when presenting. In addition, 66% ($n = 62$) of the students who participated in the survey reported that they were aware of their weaknesses and strengths in presenting, which is indispensable to taking an action towards setting the next objective in their zone of proximity. To exemplify, one student expressed the following.

> "I spent 3 hours to choose I topic, I am a very picky person in a negative sense. I wanted to choose between the flu virus, misconceptions about evolution and Virtual Reality devices. I then proceeded to read about the material, and then was unsure about which material should be used for the content of my presentation. I guess preparing a presentation in one day is not good, I should think it over several days, more time for my brain to work things out. In all honesty, I didn't rehearse at all. I added too much content, knowingly, but I do like the subject." (Student5)

Another student stated that:

> "Although I was not well prepared, I felt so relaxed before the presentations…Since I develop some strategies to decrease my anxiety before the presentations. For example, I didn't eat too much, drink coffee or smoke. I also visualize the scene that I present something to the audience. Before the presentations I did my research properly and I got lots of points related to the topics, but I didn't memorize the whole thing intentionally." (Student13)

From the above sample statements of students' entries in the Reflection Journal, it was clear that they were aware of their weaknesses and strengths in presenting and accordingly tried to take some precautions. They tried to plan their presentation strategically, setting goals for themselves. This stage is referred to as forethought and performance/volitional control in cyclical self-regulatory phases by Zimmerman (2000). Writing in their Reflection Journal, they can observe and judge themselves and thereby might become more self-regulated in future. That is: The Reflection Journal could be inferred to help promoting students' self-regulation skills.

Similarly, 66% ($n = 62$) of the sample were aware of what might distract them when they were presenting. Again, at the same ratio, students reported that they knew also know the ideal physical setting to prepare their presentations. Furthermore, 67% ($n = 63$) knew how to determine their comfort zone in a presentation setting. Actually, the survey asked whether students were aware of their time management skills, the distracters to ignore, and their comfort zone too, and the results reveal that on average about 66% ($n = 62$) of the students were aware of their competence in each of the constructs of a presentation, which would make it more likely for them to make a thorough examination of their performance. However, only 22% ($n = 21$) of the students recorded their presentations to see their

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weaknesses and strengths after the presentation although it was highly recommended by the instructors. The resistance could be interpreted as students' not being used to taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning. However, 66% ($n = 62$) found it helpful to obtain feedback from classmates when considering the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation.

In terms of the second research question which concerns the degree to which the Reflection Journal promotes students' self-regulated learning skills in presenting, items numbered 1-10-11-12-13-15-16-17 were asked to the students. Of these items, item-12 was reverse-coded because it was a reverse item. The findings indicated that the majority of the students (82%, $n = 77$) knew what is expected from them in keeping their Reflection Journal. On the contrary, only a small percentage of students (22%, $n = 21$) found it useful to make notes reflecting on their presentations later the same day.

However, in relation to writing the Reflection Journal, most students (72%, $n = 68$) stated that writing it made them more aware of what to avoid in their next presentation, which shows the undeniable benefit of keeping such a journal. On this issue, for instance; one of them stated that:

> "Since anxiety is something very physical to me (which was especially apparent in my voice shaking in first presentation and my jittery bodily movements in the second), I think beta-blockers taken one hour before the presentations are a good idea. I also aim to be more organized for the final presentation now that I've got the gist of it - it apparently comes down to being practical and planned, and it is not about speaking English well. I also look forward to stroll through possible presentation topics for the final presentation." (Student6)

Other students reflected:

> "I definitely plan to remember to make eye-contact in my next presentations. In addition, rehearsing with different words and sentences may help me get ready for the presentation without memorizing it. My audience looked like they understood my quotations because I used clear and easily understandable ones. I felt relieved after my presentations and thought that it wasn't necessary to get stressed about it that much. I think this will help me with my anxiety problem in the future presentations." (Student24)

> "If I could present again, I would have more eye contact with the audience to present more effectively and to get more immediate feedback. I think the details in the content were enough in both of my presentations considering the time limits. In the future, I think that I will again keep the amount of content the same. Also, I could add a joke to lure the attention of the audience and I think that can be helpful to deliver my message easily. So, in the next presentations, I will be more eager to have jokes." (Student17)

From the above sample student entries, it was clear that the Reflection Journal facilitating self-evaluation helped them to promote volitional performance control described in the cyclical self-regulatory phases by Zimmerman (2000).

Less than half of the students (44%, $n = 41$) said they wrote their Reflection Journal without a deep analysis of their presentation because they thought this would be time-consuming. They generally did not prefer to write their Reflection Journal on the same day that they presented. Actually, this might have given them a chance to de-familiarize themselves from their own performance, and then to have a more objective perspective when they viewed their video recording later. So, the fact that they preferred not to write their reflections on the same day may even be an asset.

In terms of the function of the Reflection Journal to obtain feedback from their friends, 66% of the students ($n = 62$) found it useful and helpful. This finding demonstrates how peer feedback helped students to reflect on one's own development, and this clearly provides evidence to believe that self-regulated learning and self-efficacy does not necessarily involve the presenter only, but it involves

peers too in the process. On the contrary, reflection is definitely enhanced through more interaction during peer feedback.

The rubric for any task assigned to students and evaluated should be transparent to students, yet it is uncommon for students to analyse the rubrics shared with them in detail. In this case, though, the rubric was a guide since apparently, it was referred to by 66% ($n = 62$) of the students when they were keeping their journals. Similarly, the questions provided as guidelines were referred to by the same percentage of students, which implies that they did make use of personal inspection questions to have an insight on their presentations when completing the journal task.

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Although self-regulation, autonomy and agency are terminology widely used and continuously redefined in the literature, they still remain to be 'muddy' (Thomas & Rose, 2018), it is a common understanding that adapting self-regulatory behaviour through reflection of actual school performances develops learning strategies. Former context-situated qualitative method studies on school-based intervention to promote self-regulation support the fact that the design of tasks play a significant role in students' learning process in several ways (Rose, Briggs, Boggs, Sergio & Ivanova-Slavianskaia, 2017). The Reflection Journal was designed to make students think about and control their own learning by raising their awareness on their weak and strong skills, and the personal strategies they could develop to overcome hindrances for more effective presentations. 'The conscious realization of what strategies are applied in a given activity increases the chances of transfer to other tasks' (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). The results of the present study clearly revealed that the intended awareness was at least triggered by the task. Yet, the results also indicated that the Reflection Journal was somewhat effective in making the students think in retrospect and reflect on their learning experience. Another study whose participants were also university level students, conducted in Taiwan with experiment and control groups indicate the contribution of reflective sharing discussions on students' motivation (Wang, Chen, Lin & Hong, 2017). There is a positive correlation between the reflective discussions and positive thinking, learning motivation and self-regulation which was one of the findings of this study on reflective journals as well. Therefore, this study is in line with the earlier studies concluding that reflection and journal keeping have an undeniable positive influence on students improved academic performance, self-reflection, and learning (Al-Rawahi, & Al-Balushi, 2015; Gleaves et al., 2008; McCrindle & Christensen, 1995, Lew & Schmidt, 2001). It seems to have made minor details that they would not otherwise dwell on, important for them. Yet, a minority of students did not make a thorough personal analysis of their own learning strategies. The comments ended up being superficial and repetitive. The major reason for this may be the design of the task since students may have a negative attitude towards a writing task in English classes and may have seen the task as one of the students puts it 'another burden on their shoulders' in the open-ended question. Still, they believed that the journal was designed to make themselves improve their performance rather than having the teacher 'make it magically for them' as another student words it in the open-ended question. The responsibility for being an autonomous learner even at university level does not seem to be fully appreciated in this context. Unfortunately, not many students said they enjoyed cooperating and collaborating with their classmates not for the sake of more grades, but for learning reasons. While they still valued the teacher as the transmitter of information, they did gain autonomy, they said through the feedback they received from their friends before they wrote down their journal entry.

4.1. Limitations and Suggestions

Regarding the limitations of this study, first of all, the results were based on 94 students who volunteered to participate. Those students who volunteered might have been more attentive, hardworking and motivated than others, and hence their survey results should not be generalized to a wider population. Secondly, the survey was given by the class teacher which may be a drawback in the

reliability of the research instrument since students may have been a little hesitant in sharing their honest ideas, assuming that their responses were not really anonymous. Not only being graded by the instructor but also being supportive of the motivation she had toward designing and requiring a task that required self-inspection and development might have made some of the answers biased in that students might have been under the influence of their relationship with the instructor as a latent variable affecting their replies to the questions on the survey. Thirdly, the participants may have felt obliged to give mostly socially acceptable feedback about each other's presentations before they wrote their journal entries, which might also have resulted in a more overall and tolerant analysis of themselves in their journals, with most thinking highly of their performance. Finally, having to use the target language to reflect on their presentations may have presented a further barrier for students when reporting their true feelings.

Future research might focus on self-regulation through keeping a close watch of one's own performance and developing and trying out personal strategies even more now that the shift in education towards distance and online education because of the recent epidemic which had to lockdown the brick and mortar schools all over the world and which forced a remote emergency teaching alternative on teachers of all levels. Assessment testing information is becoming old fashioned and much less meaningful every day, when personal discovery and development shadows the knowledge of input and emphasises the development of skills. So, research can focus on investigating the impact of reflective journals in online teaching, especially the presentation-oriented courses offered online.

The central argument of this study is that self-regulated learning should become an educational goal in our classes, to that end, not only language teachers but also all teachers are advised to devise instruments to support metacognition on the process of learning. It can be achieved if tasks are designed to affect learning of knowledge and skills systematically through having students generate ideas, feelings and actions (Zimmerman, 2000). As little expressed it very simply; 'language learner autonomy is not an optional extra' (2007, p.27). Hopefully, the students who were required to regulate their learning, and reach self-efficacy were motivated to promote a lifelong autonomous learning experience since the perception of the students of the coursework, their motivation and self-regulation are found to be correlated in previous research (Alzubaidi, Alridge, & Khine, 2014). Such reflection tasks are not very common in the education system in which this research was conducted, but apparently students do benefit from them to a large extent, therefore, when designing required tasks in any curriculum, it would be unacceptable to underestimate the value of one's own reflection on his learning strategies. Self-regulation skills could bring success to a great extent enhancing an awareness and capability of managing time, task strategies, goal orientations, making judgements about one's own learning, self-reaction, etc. Therefore, it is highly recommended to focus on self-regulation skills of students to achieve desired goals. As a concluding remark, to emphasize the importance of self-regulation John Gardner states that "The ultimate goal of the educational system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education" (as cited in Lan, 2010) which is the motto of Zimmerman and Schunk's book on the topic (1989).

Ethics Committee Permit Information
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Appendix 1. Journal entry

● Write a paragraph of 75-100 words in each box below reflecting on the **content/ organization/ language/ delivery/ audio-visual aids** of your presentation.

● You may refer to **the document (p. 126)** in the course book or the **presentation rubrics** available on *department web site > compulsory courses > 211.*

● Some of the aspects you might want to write about can be specific points about your **presentation skills, worries, strategies you have used/ will use to overcome technical/ physical/ emotional problems.**

Before the presentation

During the presentation

Strengths of my presentation were...

Weaknesses of my presentation were...

Future plans/ anticipated problems/ possible remedies

Appendix 2. Reflection questions in writing the reflection journal

Before the presentation
1. How anxious was I? Was my anxiety manageable?
2. What strategies can I use to deal with my anxiety?
3. Does what I eat or drink before the presentation matter?
4. Have I checked my comfort zone in the classroom?
5. Do I need to decide how to keep my hands from shaking? In case of emergency, do I have an acceptable object (the remote, my note cards or a board marker maybe) to hold handy, or a lectern to hide behind until I feel fine on the spotlight?
6. Have I rehearsed well (standing up, in front of an audience, etc.)? Have I rehearsed too many times and memorized my content?
7. Have I timed my presentation?
8. Have I checked the remote, the laser, the speakers, etc. before I started?
9. If I don't get help from my friends can I start the slideshow myself, use the blank button on the projectors' remote, etc.?
10. Am I genuinely interested in what I am presenting? Besides nerves, am I excited to be talking about this topic?

During the presentation
1. What kind of immediate feedback has helped me?
2. Which friends were more comforting to keep eye contact with, why?
3. Was I actually interested in what I presented?
4. Was my choice of topic of any interest to my audience? Why/ why not? How could I tell?
5. What do I assume that my audience will remember after my presentation? Why? What did I do that made them remember it?
6. Have I put any effort into relating my content to the audience's background somehow?
7. Have I decided when to pause a little to help my audience decipher my content, to help myself take a breath, to emphasize the importance of what I have just said or would say next, etc.?

8. Which bookish words did not mean much to my audience?
9. Which sentences do I think needed to be paraphrased for my audience to follow me easily?
10. Was my *outline audience-friendly? Di I help my audience follow me using signposts?*

After the presentation

In retrospect:

1. What would I definitely do differently if I could present again?
2. Would I include more details or fewer, if I could rearrange my content?
3. Did my audience look like they understood my quotation/s, and its importance? If not what could I have done to deliver its message to them?
4. Was there any part that I could add personal content, a joke or an anecdote to enhance the message I intended to give?
5. Did I have a few authentic English fillers in my mind to avoid awkward silence when I was thinking?
6. I would never again....
7. It was a good idea to....
8. When I finished I felt....
9. I can teach myself to....
10. I can survive without....

Appendix 3. **Journal entry rubric**

		3	2	1	0.5
Content	The student: ● effectively reflects on his/her presentation process in terms of: ➢ **Anticipated achievements/ problems** ➢ **Strengths and weaknesses** ➢ **His/her future plans** ● justifies the comments s/he makes by giving **specific evidence from the presentation**				
Organization	The student: ● uses **transitional & cohesive devices** effectively to connect ideas ● produces a text that **flows smoothly**	1	0.7	0.5	0.2
Language	The student: ● makes accurate use of **grammar & vocabulary** ● makes accurate use of **punctuation & spelling**	1	0.7	0.5	0.2

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