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## Utilizing Podcasting as a multimodal rehearsal task for fostering communicative competence of pre-service FLE teachers in Istanbul University- Cerrahpaşa

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### Utiliser le Podcast comme une tâche de répétition multimodale pour favoriser la compétence communicative des futurs enseignants de français langue étrangère à l'Université d'Istanbul - Cerrahpaşa

#### Résumé

La multimodalité est définie au sens large comme des pratiques d'apprentissage différencié dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères par le biais de multiples canaux de communication, sur une gamme diversifiée de contenus et avec une variété d'outils pédagogiques avec une perspective de nouvelles littératies qui en résulte. En vue de proposer un modèle de tâche multimodale dans le cadre de la description de la multimodalité mentionnée ci-dessus, la présente étude traitera principalement de la question de la mise en œuvre de la tâche de podcasting en tant qu'approche multimodale, dans le cours de « compétences communication orale II » destiné aux étudiants de première année du département de l'Enseignement du Français Langue étrangère (FLE) à l'Université d'Istanbul-Cerrahpaşa. Pour cela, une étude de cas descriptive a été utilisée afin d'interpréter les résultats d'apprentissage et les réflexions des enseignants en formation. Dans le cadre de l'étude, 6 enseignants en formation initiale (N = 6) ont été progressivement impliqués dans une tâche de répétition structurée qui vise à construire un podcast pour un public réel. Afin de suivre leurs progrès perçus dans des domaines déterminés de compétence communicative et littératie numérique, les participants ont été invités à évaluer la performance de leur tâche après chaque phase de la tâche, y compris une auto-évaluation globale de leur accomplissement. Les données obtenues grâce aux entrées des participants ont été codées selon un motif, catégorisées et interprétées dans le cadre du processus d'analyse du contenu. Les résultats indiquent que les participants ont déclaré gagner en autonomie par rapport au développement de leurs compétences en communication orale, faisant régulièrement référence à une autonomie accrue, une amélioration de l'intonation et de la segmentation des discours, un engagement personnel et une diminution de l'anxiété de communication.

**Mots-clés :** tâche, tâche de répétition, podcast, enseignement du FLE, multimodalité

## Istanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa'da Fransızca Öğretmenliği Programında Okuyan Öğretmen Adaylarının İletişim Becerilerini Geliştirmek İçin Multimodal Bir Görev Olarak Podcast Kullanımı

### Özet

Çoklu Modalite (Multi Modalite), geniş anlamıyla, yabancı dil eğitiminde çoklu iletişim kanalları aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilen farklılaştırılmış öğrenme uygulamaları olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çoklu Modalite terimi popüleritesini yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin gelişmesine ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan yeni okuryazarlık türleriyle pedagojideki gelişmelere borçludur. Bu çalışmanın esas amacı Çoklu Modalite'nin tanımından yola çıkarak, İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa, Fransız Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalında birinci sınıf öğrencilerine okutulan Sözlü Söylem Becerileri II adlı derste uygulanmak üzere Podcast Üretimi ile gerçekleştirilen Çoklu Modal Görevi tartışmaktır. Bu amaçla, öğrenme çıktılarını ve öğretmen adaylarının düşüncelerini analiz etmek üzere betimsel durum çalışması yapılmıştır. Çalışmada, 6 öğretmen adayından (N = 6) kademeli olarak gerçek izleyiciler için bir podcast oluşturmayı amaçlayan yapılandırılmış bir prova (gerçek dünya) görevini yerine getirmeleri istendi. Belirlenen iletişimsel yeterlilik ve dijital okuryazarlık alanlarında öğretmen adaylarının gelişmelerini takip etmek için, katılımcılardan, genel bir öz değerlendirme ile birlikte, tamamlanan her görev aşamasının ardından performanslarını değerlendirmeleri istendi. Katılımcıların öz-değerlendirme ve performans raporlarından elde edilen verilerden öncelikle örüntüler çıkarıldı, bu örüntüler kategorize edildi ve içerik analizine tabi tutularak yorumlandı. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, katılımcıların sözlü iletişim becerileri bağlamında özerklik kazandıklarını, söylemlerinin yapılandırılması ve tonlama konularında gelişme kaydettiklerini ve iletişim kaygılarının azaldığını bildirdikleri gözlenmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** görev, gerçek dünya görevi, podcast, yabancı dil olarak Fransızca eğitimi, çoklu modalite

### Abstract

Multimodality in language education is widely being described as differentiated learning practices undertaken through multiple communication channels, on a diverse range of content and with variety of pedagogical tools at work with a resulting new literacies perspective. This frame of language education as a multimodal meaning making process, has also led to a re-consideration of the didactic and pedagogical implementations in the field and brought about questions on how to address this variety. In order to come up with a multimodal task model within the given description of multimodality, the current study mainly deals with the issue of implementing podcasting task as a multimodal approach to Oral Communication Skills Course II of the first grade French as a Foreign Language Teaching Department (FLTE) students at Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa. For this, a descriptive case study was employed for interpreting the learning outcomes and pre-service teachers' reflections. As part of the study, 6 pre-service teachers (N=6) were gradually involved in a structured rehearsal task that aims constructing a podcast for real audience. In order to keep track of their perceived progress across determined areas of communicative competence and digital literacy, the participants were asked to evaluate

their task performance subsequent to each phase of the task, including an overall self-evaluation of their attainment. The data obtained through participants' entries were pattern coded, categorized and interpreted as part of the content analysis process. The results indicate that participants reported gaining autonomy over the development of their oral communication skills recurrently referring to increased autonomy, improvement in intonation & segmenting of speech, self-engagement and decreased communication anxiety.

**Keywords:** task, rehearsal task, podcast, French as a foreign language teaching, multimodality

## Introduction

In the literature on multimodal language teaching, the term multimodality has exponentially been defined with references to the element of "variety" in channels of perception and senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) (Tellier, 2009:223), modes of communication (writing, speaking, gesture, gaze, visual signification) (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001) discourse types & literacy (Cazden et.al.,1996) means of semiotic representation as well as the array of classroom practices used for teaching/ education (Jewitt, 2008). Thus, a broad conceptualization of multimodality incorporates a multiplicity of ways for viewing communication as well as semiotic resources and organizational channels of the meaning making practice. In this sense, rather than forming a single theory as a point of departure for research, the term entails "a field of application" that can be employed by diverse disciplines such as sociology, psychology and pedagogy (Jewitt, 2008).

When the use of multimodality in education is concerned, until recently it was viewed as a complementary domain that supports the in-school teaching by way of providing varied input in line with the traditional understanding of education. However, in the changing paradigm of the teaching/ learning contexts, it has been usually allocated an increasingly crucial role of mediating between the formal school practice and the informal learning practice that takes place out of the school. Hence, the multimodal approach -in every aspect of teaching- can provide authentic practice by fostering learner autonomy and encouraging learners to participate actively in self initiated learning process. This is carried out not only by way of varying the input but also transforming the channels of communication, including a variety of discourse modes, and operationalizing new literacies as well as varying the language learning tools/pedagogies. As implied by the definition of Belik and Teil (1992: 230), it is "the use of several modalities for the achievement of the same task" that marks multimodal approach as a reference point for varied and authentic nature of "task based" practices. In this vein, The New London Group

(Cazden et.al., 1996), has put forward that the diversification of communication channels as well as the increased linguistic and cultural hybridity worldwide has replaced traditional language-based approaches with an emerging need for a multi-modal task based approach.

In this new learning environment shaped by innovative communication and learning theories, “the learner” has been replaced from the role of a passive recipient of input to an active participant of learning, mainly by way of a social turn in learning activities (Block, 2003). This shift has brought about a change in the multiple variables of education, signaled by an increased focus on learner autonomy, diversity, curricular integration, cooperative learning, thinking skills, and meaning orientedness, in line with the principles of active learning. In this regard, the transformation in the current paradigm of education, fuelled by a constructivist conception of learner-centeredness as well as the developments in communication technologies, contributes to the accessibility and usability aspects of the learning tools. In turn, such a reframing of “learning” entails an interpretation of multimodality not only as multiplicity of technologically inspired multimedia materials, but also as a diversification of modes of discourse, and variation between diverse communication channels. Within this frame, for the purposes of our research, multimodality is regarded from a wholistic perspective as “interpenetrating practices of meaning making through multiple channels of communication, in varying modes of discourse, by way of diversified multimedia learning opportunities both inside and outside the school”. This involves using the combination of several learning methods, resources, and discourses for the purpose of making available to a learner the necessary channels for completing his/her learning under best possible conditions, in terms of learning environment, time, media and digital tools.

The emergent conceptualization of communication as a multimodal meaning making practice locates discourse in the realms of new literacies. The act of communication has gained a meaning that goes well beyond Jakobson’s (1963) depiction of it as a linear sequence of transmitting messages from the locutor to the illocutor. It has come to involve all the processes employed for decoding and encoding a message or interpreting a behavior, including a consideration of all the linguistic, non-linguistic, visual, auditory, kinesthetic and semiotic means available in the social context of use. Contrary to the formulation of communication as information transfer, this might be regarded as an interplay of “frameworks” within which the interlocutors express themselves (Hall, 2001). It requires the “orchestration” of all the potential sources and channels of “meaning making” available to the interlocutors (Winkins, 1981), following the analogy of orchestrate and listing the variety of factors at play. Those who observe this instance of communication are mainly

concerned with the questions of “which satisfaction”, “at which observation level”, “which collective performance”, and “which emergence”. On the other hand, those who participate are simultaneously concerned with “which synchronization”, “which direction”, “which regulatory code”, “which interactional systems” and “which reciprocal place”, and “with which role in the community”. Following this broad framing of communication- also asserted by Hall’s frameworks of knowledge model-, the modes of discourse have been transformed both in terms of function and form. Text (written) has -to a large extent- been replaced by voice due to the fast circulation of multimedia content (video and audio) as commodified discourses of consumption (Boulard, 1999). This era of facilitated communication reliant on multimodal means has been termed as “post- text” era (Manjoo, 2018) with resulting observable changes in the contexts of language teaching/learning not only limited to a change in the types of discourse but also impacting the very channels of self-expression.

In this sense, the conceptualization of communicative competence has extended to include the crucial and interpenetrating components of linguistic competence (the know-how on language rules including grammar, pronunciation, intonation, clustering, etc.), sociolinguistic competence (the know-how on speech accommodation towards a given audience, interlocutor, etc.), discourse competence (the know-how on genre specific coherence and cohesion rules of textuality), strategic competence (the know-how on a repertoire of communication strategies to avoid communication breakdowns among the interlocutors) (Canale, Swain, 1980). Therefore, the implications of multimodality in the language class require an increased focus on diverse channels of self-expression, on multiple modes of discourse and by using a variety of pedagogical tools for “*studying the nature of multimodal exchanges*” (Chanier, Vetter, 2006: 66). Thus, multimodality in the language class is a variable not only the students but also the teachers could consider in the curriculum design, material development and the lesson procedures. From this perspective, the language class is viewed as a field of multimodal exchange facilitated by the use of various instructional tools and tasks that allow the learners to experience real life language practices and evaluate their own performances.

The multimodal activation of the language learners, however, requires the achievement of particular digital literacy skills and competences on the part of the teachers as well as the learners in the post-text era of communication. Digital literacy- or previously termed as Internet and Communication Technologies literacy- comes to cover the particular subskills of identifying, accessing, managing/manipulating, integrating, assessing/evaluating, constructing/producing and sharing information (O’Connor et.al., 2001). For a successful implementation of multimodality

in the language class, the know-how on how to utilize specific tools that enable various modes and channels of communication also need to be activated.

At this point, this study is taking an exploratory standpoint by employing a model language task that utilizes podcast as a multimodal means of improving:

- a. the oral communication skills of the first grade French as a Foreign Language Teaching (FLE) department students (as language learners),
- b. the digital literacy skills of the same participants (as future teachers).

In this sense, the model task serves as a reflective instrument for the current study in unearthing the participants' implications on their 6 week-long experience of podcasting with regard to the following research questions:

1. In what areas of their communicative competence do the participants observe a significant potential transformation?
2. How do the learners report benefiting from the podcasting experience pedagogically as a reflective tool?
3. What potential contributing value/challenge is attributed to the use of podcasting in developing oral proficiency?

The study comprises of three interconnected phases. In the first part, multimodality was discussed in relation to the practice of teaching foreign languages from aspects of speech, perceptual modality and modes of communication, respectively. In the second phase, task-based language teaching and tasks were put under focus regarding their pedagogical value for multimodal foreign language teaching. Finally, the third phase of the study took an exploratory approach through a case study design to explore how podcasting- as a task- is reported to impact the development of communicative competence as well as the digital literacy skills among the participants.

### **Language Tasks**

A language task is defined in a variety of ways with shifting focus on the different characteristics of it as a pedagogic tool. In Common European Framework's (CEF) (2001: 10) description, a task is referred to as "any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved". Extending the borders of the language teaching pedagogy, this definition points out to a "real-life orientation" also defended by the interactionist perspectives to task, such as Long (1985: 89), who undertook a description of task as "any activity people will tell you they do if you ask them; and they do not have to be applied linguists".

In other efforts to reframe tasks within language pedagogy, a task has usually been referred to as containing the attributes of meaning prioritization, close relation to real life activities, greater emphasis on task completion than accurate production, and assessment in terms of task accomplishment (Skehan, 1998: 89). Thus, participation in a real-life activity- by making use of language or other diverse means of communication- is central to defining a task. This reflects a shift to multi-modal ways of “experiencing language” from the traditional “text based” language pedagogy. In contrast to exercises and activities that merely rely on language mastery, tasks encourage creative language use and free production (multiple outcome) through multiple types and channels of input. They do not only pose cognitive challenges to be dealt with by the learners, but also various task demands to be tackled, time constraints, and psycholinguistic demands, which turns the learner’s activity into a multi-modal and meaningful practice. Particularly, tasks that simulate real life tasks -termed as rehearsal tasks- form a site of multi modal learning by “re-constructing a pseudo-natural environment” where learners can negotiate meaning via diverse semiotic, discursive and instructional means towards the accomplishment of a task (Gilakjani et. al, 2011: 10). In this sense, tasks form a fruitful site of language practice and research for multimodal language teaching& learning practice, as they;

- activate the learners multimodally towards the achievement of the task,
- foresee multiple, individualized and unpredictable outcome
- include cognitive, linguistic and task demands at an optimum level of difficulty
- assess the performance of the learners on a basis of task achievement.

A task- based lesson procedure might also be considered of relevance to multi-modal language learning practice for involving the learners in various processes of self- initiated exploration, meaning negotiation, task completion, planning, reporting and analysis. In the task-based paradigm of a lesson, initially the learner is required to explore the already completed samples of a task and provided with the instructions for activating his/her previous knowledge/skills. Next, the learner is expected to accomplish the task (either individually or in pair/ group work) through dealing with the demands of the task and negotiating meaning. A successive planning phase involves the learner in a process of planning for what parts of his/ her task to report to the audience along with the decisions on what to display, how and why. The reporting phase acts as the staging of the performance and asks the learner to display the performance. Finally, in the language focus part, the learners analyze their use of language to gain an awareness of the relevant forms and reflect on their own performance.

### Podcasting as a Language Task

Considered among the new forms of digital literacy in the post text era, podcast is a valuable tool for presenting “an online culture in which text recedes to the background and sounds and images become the universal language” (Manjoo, 2018). Researchers on multimodality such as Jewitt and Kress (2003) and Buckingham (2003) have pointed out that image and sounds have reshaped- if not replaced- the text with the rise of digital Technologies and the media. Moreover, the start of a new era characterized by voice is signaled in the report by Service d’information du gouvernement Français (SIG) who mentions the increasing prominence of voiced communication in its annual reports of 2018 with the assertion that: “after the writing, the photo, the video, the future seems smile at podcasts, and through AI, at voice assistants.” (SIG, 2018: 33). This shift in the means of communication is observable in the replacement of blogs with podcast, with a resulting dominance of voice communication over text as a medium.

Podcast is a form of digital media (also termed as digital radio) in which a variety of information is diffused by means of the internet to an online /offline community of listeners. According to Guglielmo (2012: 130), podcast is distinguishable from radio in that, “radio language is linear, timed by sonic commas, by the alternation of the timbres of human voices and their particular tessituras”. However, podcast allows a temporal organization of sounds depending on the imagined community of audience selected by the producers via “superposition or juxtaposition of elements, more or less rhythmic sequences, more or less clear transitions” in order to create the intended meaning for the listeners. In other words, it gives the producer of the podcast the flexibility of manipulating the meaning through a variety of modalities including silence within the allowed mode of discourse (specific to the genre of podcast) (Oliveira, 2011: 1). For all these reasons, podcasting presents a fruitful language practice - as a multimodal task- to observe the development in the oral proficiency of the language learners as well as the progress in their digital literacies.

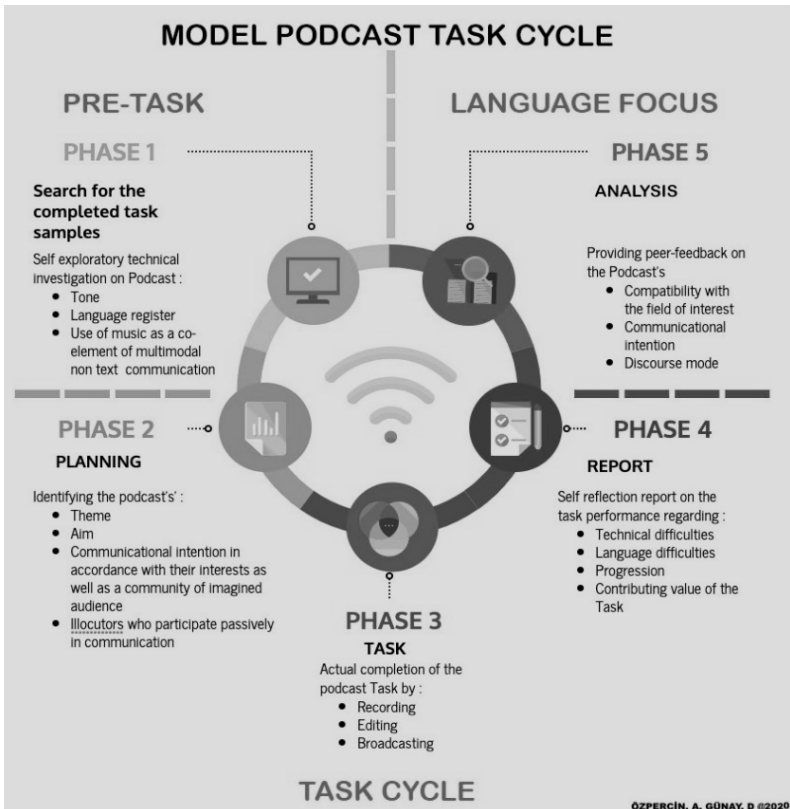
For this study, podcast was selected as the tool of both instruction and research as it allows the future teachers to display their development across the fields of oral communication in line with the requirements of the digital era. It was also a contributing factor in the selection of podcast as a task, that the dependence on voice was increased dramatically due to the conditions of pandemic, whereby people had to rely on modalities other than instances of face-to-face communication. Under these circumstances, where an increased need for self- expression emerged, podcasting has come to the fore due to its distinctive features of ;



- allowing for a longitudinal and continuing observation of progress on oral communication skills
- requiring the learners to display multimodal skills of discourse (such as adjusting the tone, using genre appropriate acts, etc.)
- fostering the production of multiple outcome (through open ended responses)
- encouraging the learners to communicate with a real community of audience

### The Model Podcast Task

The podcast task particularly designed for the aims of the current study was developed within the scope of the Oral Communication Skills-II course at the French as a Foreign Language Teaching department of Istanbul University- Cerrahpaşa in Spring 2020.



The task is composed of three main fields in respective order of; pre-task, task cycle and language focus following the Task based Lesson Paradigm. Within these three main stages, there are five successive phases.

### **A. Pre Task**

In this stage, the first phase of the task is realized starting with the instructor's introduction of podcast as a genre and the detailed instructions of the task. The participants are required to get acquainted with the specific technical and genre related dimensions of "podcast". They are directed to search for sample podcasts in order to explore the tone, language register, and the use of music as a co-element of multimodal (non-text) communication. The participants' first encounter with podcast- as a genre is established in this phase, through an analytical perspective in line with the instructions provided. The participants might have been familiar with podcast before, yet the analytical frame provided at this phase allows them to view the genre at a level of awareness. Therefore, this stage is described as the phase of first encounter.

### **B. Task Cycle**

This stage comprises of three consecutive phases of planning, task and report. In the planning phase, the participants are instructed to identify the theme, aim, communicational intention, and the potential illocutors of the podcast. Therefore, they are involved in a series of activities that are mainly concerned with the identification of their subject, designing their imagined audience in accordance with their preferred communicational intention. The second phase of the task cycle incorporates the realization of the activities foreseen in the planning phase. The participants are asked to record their podcasts, edit it in accordance with their individual plans and broadcast in a web platform. In the third phase of this stage (phase 4), the learners are required to undertake a self- reflection report and monitor their performances regarding the technical challenges encountered, the language difficulties and their progression. They are also expected to share their implications on the contributing value of the task to their oral communication skills.

### **C. Language Focus**

This stage of the task is mainly concerned with the analysis of the participants' podcasts in terms of their compatibility with the fields of interest, communicational intention and the mode of discourse. In this last phase of the model podcast task cycle, the participants remark and comment on each other's product in the form of a peer feedback session, viewing and evaluating their peers' completed work.

## **The Study: Implementation of the Model Task**

The model task, explained in detail above, was implemented with 6 participants (N=6) aged between 21 to 42 enrolled in the 1st grade course "Oral Communication

Skills II” at French as a Foreign Language Teaching Department, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, under distance learning conditions posed by the CoVID19 pandemic. The participants’ levels of proficiency in French was determined as B2-C1 in the university entrance exam- a prerequisite to enroll in the French as a Foreign Language Teaching Department. The course particularly aimed at;

- Improving verbal communication skills using appropriate expressions and strategies for a variety of verbal communication situations in French;
- Developing the ability to express emotions and thoughts effectively;
- Developing the skills of speaking and listening comprehension by using current, original, auditory, audio-visual materials

Within the scope of the task, the participants were involved in 6 consecutive activities (in 5 phases) that step by step involved them in creating their own podcasts. Prior to the study, the participants were asked to search for good samples of podcast and analyze the characteristics of them to gain familiarity with the genre. Throughout the following 6 weeks, they created their podcasts on their selected topics “Greek Mythology”, “Meditation”, “Meal recipe with children”, “Movie Critique”, “French Dialogues for beginners”, and “News on the Pandemic”. They were asked to maintain the thematic unity along the process of the task cycle, in order to be able to observe their progression in their zones of development as podcasters/ speakers in French. By the use of Podcast as the main task, the participants were involved in authentic language production for a specified community of real audience, in line with the premises of the “rehearsal task” specified earlier in this study. Thus, the task designed for this study incorporates the following distinctive characteristics that aim to address the participants’ growth across the areas of communicative competence and digital literacy:

- longitudinal and recurring,
- maintaining thematic unity
- real audience and authentic outcome oriented
- posing optimum level of communication anxiety
- freedom of topic choice

The task was implemented following the 5 phases of the model task cycle explained in detail above. The data were gathered by the transcription of the self-reflective reports undertaken by the participants in the 4th phase of the task cycle and the peer feedback session in the 5th phase under the language focus part.

The data were obtained following the research design principles and tenets of descriptive case study as it enables tracing the sequence of interpersonal interactions and reflections on a phenomenon over time. According to Yin (2017:13),

a case study “is an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. As a potentially influential case, the use of podcasting for developing oral proficiency and the participants’ experience of undertaking the rehearsal task was made possible via interpretation of this illustrative case. Accordingly, the data collected were analyzed using content analysis and category analysis methods. The themes, categories and codes that emerged were presented as patterns in the findings section. For each pattern, relevant quotations were displayed in the same section in English as testimonials of the participants themselves regarding the impact of the podcast task on their development in communicative competence and digital literacy.

## Findings and Implications on the Task Implementation

As a result of the content analysis conducted, the following patterns were revealed as the most pertinent categories in both the self -reflections and the peer feedback sessions of the participants.

### 1. Repetition Impact

Most of the participants of the podcast task cycle emphasized that they benefited from the recurring structure of the task, which allowed them to increase familiarity with the sub skills of “podcasting” in addition to making their progress observable along a continuum of development zone. This was mainly attributed to the circular progression of the task cycle in requiring the participants to realize an authentic outcome each week. The format of the predicted outcome being fixed, they attempted to add up to their performance, turning podcasting into a progressive area of achievement. The following excerpt by one of the participants clearly exemplifies this: *“While I was preparing my transcript, I erased and rewritten my sentences, wrote more beautiful sentences, more meaningful sentences, in my six-week podcast experience, I conveyed my own thoughts in six sections in French, and I think my classmates heard my French, so much for the first time in eight years of my French life”*. Likewise, the participants reported that sometimes they had to record, delete and revise or re-record certain parts of their podcast several times, multiplying the impact of repetition in a meaningful way- a crucial condition for learning to take place. *“Let’s not forget that there are 12 hours behind a tiny 5-6 minutes audio recording expect a 1-2 hour launch break”*. As observed in the quotation the participants report a noticeable difference between their initial and final performances.

## 2. Gaining Genre Familiarity/ Awareness

Another implication that was revealed out of the participants' reflections concerns being acquainted with the specifics of Podcast as a genre. The participants were involved in a self-exploratory task prior to giving decisions on their theme of preference to build their podcasts on. This preparatory phase of the task, which asked them to view the successful samples of the genre allowed them to give specific decisions on how to initiate a podcast, how to make use of the music (both as a background and co-element of speech), how to enunciate and how/where to use discourse markers to connect their propositions logically. This impact relates to gaining awareness of the genre and is signaled in the excerpt as "*I've listened to the most popular podcasters. I listened (I've noticed) to the way of talking (talking styles) of the podcasters*". It is also among the most frequently observed patterns that talking to a real audience, and broadcasting what they recorded influenced their performance to a great extent. The targeted audience/ imagined audience might have influenced the podcasters' production, as has been put forward in the quotation that follows. "*While I was preparing my transcript, I erased and rewritten my sentences, wrote more beautiful sentences, more meaningful sentences, in my six-week podcast experience, I conveyed my own thoughts in six sections in French, and I think my classmates heard my French, so much for the first time in eight years of my French life*".

## 3. Increased Self-Confidence/ Decreased Communication Anxiety

A recurring theme, both in the self-reflections and the peer-feedback transcriptions, is the recourse to "increased self-confidence" owing to the lack of fear for being evaluated. While podcasting, the participants reported they were let free of the anxieties, mainly because it was a task that asked them to talk in the form of a monologue- yet with an imagined audience to be reached out. They were given the chance to self- evaluate their performance adjusting their language and tone to their audience - an integrative motivation conditioned by the impact of the podcast on potential listeners. In the excerpt taken from one of the participants' reflections, this is obvious in the quotation that reads "*I am very afraid to speak French. Speaking in French with my intonations, my accents or pauses between phrases are subject that I really drew upon, so I started listening to a lot of podcasts and discovered a lot of people who were interested in me about films, cinema critics, interviews, French teaching. While I was listening, I repeated after them. I tried to simulate my intonation, I tried to speak like myself, and I overcame my fear a bit and actually recorded my voice and shared it*". Moreover, this optimum level of communication anxiety acts as a perpetuator for the enactment of the oral communication skills.

## 5. Self-monitoring, Autonomous Learning

The remarks made by the participants on their own performance put a particular emphasis on their ability to self-monitor their progress both linguistically and technically. Pointing to the gains of this reflective practice, they highlighted a moment of realization when they were able to identify their mistakes, which turns into a chance to re-construct their hypothesis about the oral and technical aspects of the language they use. As the quotation describes in saying, *“It allowed me to see if I speak French well and to see if people would understand me”*, being able to view own performance, and develop their own strategies to overcome the challenges implicate autonomous learning and strategy based training. This is quite observable in the quotation that reads *“The rating I received is enough to begin with, as it was quite difficult to make a sound recording in Turkish, and I recorded it in a foreign language and I created a systematic search technique for myself”*.

## 6. Improvement in Intonation & Segmenting of the Speech

Regarding the development of communicative competence, the participants highlighted the specific fields of their oral language use showed considerable improvement as they progressed in tasks. Excited by the progress they made, one of the participants put it that *“When it comes to words in mutual conversation, I didn’t pay attention to the pronunciation of the word, now I have but started to pay attention to pronounce with French accents foreign names coming from other languages”*. In compliance with this remark, they also reported the gradual disappearance of trembling voice, untimely pauses and increased pace of speaking as in this quotation. *“I can’t forget that I couldn’t even adjust my breath when trying to speak very fluently. I Repeated recording from the beginning many times.”*

## 7. Assessment in terms of Outcome/ Peer Feedback

The participants also mentioned having experienced an evaluation of their performance based on the resulting impact of the podcasts on the real audience as in the comments like: *“I was also able to see if the topics I chose appealed to the people listening to me”*. This deviates from a summative judgement being made by a teacher in that, success of the outcome is tested under real time conditions by the listeners’ authentic responses. This gave them an opportunity to check how they sound from the perspective of their audience. The peer- feedback on the task was mostly found helpful for shaping and re-editing the podcasts. Remarks such as *“I liked this quietness of tone. I found exactly the right directions I needed. It was really useful and impressive.”* Or *“the subject was good, but its form of*

*explanation and ordination was wrong. I didn't understand what exactly she wants to give to listeners.*” acted as constructive criticisms for adjusting their language or if necessary, re-edit their podcast.

## 8. Self-Engagement

The participants completing the task also mentioned being motivated by their own performance rather than by an external instrument in the form of a grade. Indeed, they stated that they found the task itself meaningful because it had a real implication to real life and the outcome was tangible in the form of their personalized performance. This is clearly visible in the quotation which says: *“I started doing it for the sake of self-indulgence, and then I realized I wasn't doing it because I wanted to treat. Even if it had to be done, someone didn't have to like what I was doing, so I started going instinctively, I think that's what happened because I was trying to create more artwork than a podcast”*. A similar touch on self-indulgence is referred in various other participants, as is the case with the quotation that reads: *“I liked it because, It may not be possible for our firsts to be perfect, and I want to achieve not the perfect one, but the one that has always improved me in everything”*.

## Conclusion

As a multimodal practice of learning, the podcast task developed for the aims of this study served dual aims. First, it functioned as a learning tool for the participants of the study to develop their oral communication skills regarding various aspects of their communicative competence as well as their digital literacy skills. Second, it served as a tool of reflection for observing the validity of our instruction and assessment towards the same aim from the participants' perspectives. The podcast task was meant to activate the participants multimodally by putting them to work on a form of “voice” interaction -a mode of discourse that has gained much prominence in the so called post-text era. At the same time, the variety of digital tools and the multiplicity of learning instruments employed for the accomplishment of the task form a further point of consideration with respect to multimodality.

The interpretation of the data obtained as a result of the podcast task's implementation revealed that, “podcast” might offer effective oral communication practice when considered from the participants' viewpoint. This might be carried out by gradually involving the learners in a workplan whereby they explore the samples of podcast as a genre, identify their own preferred themes and communicational intentions, record, broadcast and evaluate their own outcomes.

A consideration of the participant responses who were involved in these steps of the task cycle, tell us that the task helped them gain genre awareness, and organize their speech with increased attention to segmenting as well as intonation rules- a crucial component of linguistic competence. It also resulted in increased self-confidence, self-engagement and self-monitoring- the necessary skills for empowering learner autonomy from a pedagogical perspective. The impact of having to record their voices so many times and assessment of the task performance on its own right were also considered by them among the influential practices for developing the linguistic and discourse dimensions of their overall communicative competence, as all these processes require not only the meticulous application of and compliance to the discourse features of the podcast genre but also the accurate production of segmental and suprasegmental streams of sound.

Regarding the crucial components of the communicative competence, the findings indicate to the participants' most commonly referred experience as improvement in intonation and segmenting of speech and gaining genre familiarity. The reported improvement in the former is compatible with the linguistic component of communicative competence, in that, acquiring the ability to apply the phonetic and phonological rules accurately forms a structural constituent of this subskill. The participants reported to have made progress in this critical core skill by noticing their own mistakes, repeating the recording procedure and transforming their intonation, emphasis, segmenting patterns to sound clearer. The latter improvement they mentioned- gaining genre familiarity- concerns their discourse competence and accounts for the appropriate use of discourse markers, conjunctions and cohesive devices for producing a coherent discourse compatible with the genre of podcast. This is also found contributing to their strategic competence by posing them the challenge to consider their audience and apply the required strategies within the given frame of genre to establish the link between the audience and producer of the podcast.

As for the reported pedagogical impacts of the podcasting task at hand, the participants substantially mentioned the influence of repetition on their performance. The increased chances of extensive reflective practice by being able to record their voices, listen to themselves and edit the podcast by providing an amended version of their records each time enabled them to self-monitor their mistakes. This is also relevant to the principles of autonomous learning facilitated through self-assessment grids and peer feedback sessions- an impact also mentioned among the monitor hypothesis of language acquisition. Thus, the participants reported to be taking an initiative to be responsible for their own learning through hypothesis formation and trial rather than being instructed externally. Their testimonials on



decreased communication anxiety at the end of the process along with increased self-engagement might be found relevant to socio-affective aspects of language learning lowering the barrier of affective filter.

A crucial finding relevant to the perceived contributing value of the podcasting task was that the use BYOD (bring your own device) -in the form of a smart phone-to record, edit and broadcast voices across real audience were reported to be useful for giving chances to produce, update and share the outcomes- the podcasts-anywhere. This required the participants to employ their digital literacy skills of producing, manipulating and sharing information. The challenges encountered by the participants throughout the process such as inserting background music, designing the audience, and recording multiple takes for a single line were reported to have an improving impact on the ways they make use of digital technologies.

To sum up, multimodal ways of language teaching/learning have come to incorporate not only the diversity in the channels of communication (be it perceptual or discursive) but also the variety of pedagogical tools. As developments in technology transform the channels of communication, the scope and practices of multimodal teaching/ learning also change, evolving to an autonomous form of learning. In this respect, it is of crucial importance for both the teachers and learners to adapt to this shift by designing tasks, opening up space for learning to be varied, and gaining the new literacy skills.

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