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## PODCASTS IN TEACHING ROMANIAN: DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPREHENSION, DIGITAL, MEDIA AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the paper is to examine the effectiveness of podcasts in Romanian language teaching at the university level, focusing on the development of vocabulary and the improvement of listening comprehension in the field of human rights at B1, B2 and C1 levels (CEFR), the improvement of digital and media literacy, and intercultural competence. The object of analysis is a podcast (short daily news) broadcast by Radio France Internationale (RFI) in the Romanian language. The CLIL method and the interdisciplinary approach were the basis for the preparation of the lesson.

The podcast, as a source of authentic material, connects students to real-world problems within a specific socio-cultural and geopolitical context. The results suggest that its main pedagogical advantages are: motivating topics, attractive format, varied tasks, personalised aspect of learning, improvement of a number of competences. The podcast in standard Romanian language, together with the previous knowledge of the language for specific purposes in the field of human rights, encouraged students to listen carefully and analytically. The podcast is suitable for students at B2 and C1 levels, while B1 level requires more preparatory exercises. The seriousness of the topic (UN report on human rights), and a number of activities used before, during and after listening contributed to the successful comprehension of the listened text.

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<sup>2</sup> The research is realized with the support of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, project no. 7736100, *Vulnerable Languages and Linguistic Varieties in Serbia – VlingS*. For more details about the project, see: [www.vlings.rs](http://www.vlings.rs). It is also realized within the Erasmus + Strategic Partnership for Digital Education Readiness: QuILL – Quality in Language Learning (project nr: 2020-1-PT01-KA226-HE-094809), financed by the European Commission through the Portuguese National Agency for Erasmus + Programmes the scientific coordinator was the Instituto Politécnico de Bragança – IPB, Portugal. More information on the project is available at: [https://quill.pixel-online.org/files/brochure/brochure\\_EN.pdf](https://quill.pixel-online.org/files/brochure/brochure_EN.pdf)

Moreover, the results show that some digital and media skills are already integrated in working with podcasts, while others can be further integrated into the curriculum. Furthermore, the article suggests that combining podcasts with data from fieldwork research on ethnolinguistic minorities in Serbia within the V LingS project could further deepen students' intercultural understanding when it comes to human and language rights, not only globally, but also locally.

**Keywords:** podcasts, Romanian as a foreign language (RFL), education policy, listening skills, digital literacy, media literacy, intercultural competence

## 1. Introduction

In today's digital age, podcasts have become increasingly popular in educational settings as an innovative tool for teaching and presenting knowledge inside and outside the classroom at university level. Their use complements textbooks and other pedagogical resources and transforms teaching practices (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007), especially for less taught languages. Research studies have also highlighted the benefits of student-produced podcasts, which require students to use a range of skills such as research, data analysis, structuring an outline, drafting, refining a script and practicing pronunciation. As a result, the process of producing content in a foreign language builds their confidence, pride and sense of achievement (Philips, 2017).

The aim of this research paper is to explore the potential of podcasts in the context of Romanian language teaching at university level, with a particular focus on the development of listening skills, digital and media literacy, and intercultural competence. The podcast used was that of Radio France Internationale (RFI), a short bulletin of 3 minutes and 4 seconds. The podcast features the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Security Council in 2021. By proposing the use of podcasts in language teaching methodology, the primary aim is to explore their potential as a valuable, innovative resource for Romanian language teachers and learners. Secondly, by examining various techniques and activities that can be implemented alongside podcasts, the paper aims to provide practical insights for teachers on how to effectively develop listening competence in Romanian language learners. Additionally, in an increasingly digital world, the article explores how learners can develop their digital and media literacy while improving their language proficiency. Finally, the article seeks to explore how podcasts can promote intercultural understanding among Romanian language learners.

The article also aims to contribute to the growing body of scholarly literature that has recently addressed various aspects of teaching and learning Romanian as a foreign language (RFL), from different contemporary perspectives on language

skills, grammar, e-learning platforms and online learning, how to incorporate elements of intercultural education, etc. In order to illustrate the attention of scholars to this topic, I will mention several proceedings of the international conference at the University of Cluj-Napoca, *Discurs polifonic în Româna ca limbă străină (RLS)*, edited by Elena Platon, Cristina Bocoș, Diana Roman and Lavinia Vasîu, which bring the latest insight on various issues in the teaching of Romanian as a foreign language (Platon et al., 2020, 2022). Similarly, in Iași, teaching and learning to communicate in Romanian as a foreign language in an intercultural context was discussed by Pricope et al. (2021). Moreover, a volume edited by Paul Nanu and Emilia Ivancu focuses on the methodology and cultural approach to teaching Romanian as a foreign language (Nanu & Ivancu, 2018), while a volume edited by Ioana Jieanu, Loredana Neteđu and Paul Nanu focuses on the pedagogical aspects of teaching Romanian as a foreign language bringing diverse articles on interculturality and the digital aspect of teaching Romanian in an online space (Jieanu et al., 2020), etc. In 2017, the University of Bucharest launched the journal *Romanian Studies Today*, which publishes the latest findings in the field, including RFL. The topic of RFL has also been in the focus of scholars in Serbia, through diverse contributions focusing on contemporary tendencies in Romanian studies (Dan, 2007), CLIL methodology in teaching academic writing through literature classes (Ćorković, 2011), interculturality (Kolesar & Popov, 2015), teaching Romanian grammar in the context of Serbia (Huțanu & Ćorković, 2017; Belada & Trajlović-Kondan, 2020), digital technology and RFL pedagogy (Ivanić, 2020), etc.

## 2. Podcasts in language teaching and learning

The podcast is a “chameleon medium” that has changed drastically over the years and is still breaking boundaries today. It has a growing number of listeners, if we compare the fact that a Google search on the term “podcast” yielded 6000 results in 2004, and 1.9 billion in 2021 (Rime et al., 2022). In the last two decades, we have witnessed different types of research on this “communicating phenomenon”, which is rapidly becoming a distinct area of research, defined and approached in different ways over time, as a technological, socio-cultural or formalistic tradition (Sharon, 2023). Many different definitions have emerged from previous research; for the purposes of this paper, I will use a broad one: “A podcast is a piece of episodic, downloadable or streamable, primarily spoken audio content, distributed via the internet, playable anywhere, at any time, produced by anyone who so wishes” (Rime et al., 2022).

When it comes to news podcasts, Newman and Gallo identified five types: 1) daily news primarily focused on current events, often involving a daily radio or TV show repackaged in podcast format, 2) talks, debates, dialogues – can be

native or catch-up, predominantly weekly and non-scripted, 3) narrative series, dedicated to single topic, with irregular frequency, 4) documentary segments, broadcast at regular intervals, covering a variety of topics, can be native or catch-up, 5) native podcast – a presentation of newspaper or magazine features, can be regular or seasonal. Unlike traditional radio, podcasts are highly engaging from the start because listeners choose the content themselves. Podcasts are often listened to alone, so the medium offers a more personal experience. The inclusivity of podcasts allows for different perspectives, whereas traditional radio generally creates content for a broader, undifferentiated audience (2019, pp. 8–13).

One of the first explorations of podcasting in SLA was by Rosell-Aguilar (2007), who presented the advantages and challenges of podcasting for language learning in the context of SLA, lifelong and mobile learning. The researcher highlighted the convenience, accessibility, attractiveness, and motivational aspects of the material, the pedagogical effectiveness of which depends on its purpose. The researcher argued that podcasts could provide authentic language material that supports different learning needs, from grammar explanations and exercises to colloquial expressions and vocabulary, listening and pronunciation, learning about the cultures of the target language, etc. (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, pp. 476, 485–486). In a later study, the same researcher concludes that the main advantage of podcasting in learning is its personalized aspect: everyone can choose to learn from this “enormous public library” what they are interested in, where and when they like and at their own pace (Rosell-Aguilar, 2015, pp. 38–39). Podcasts have been shown to significantly improve learners’ listening skills. In a study of the impact of podcasts on EFL students’ listening skills, Abdulrahman, Basalama and Widodo pointed to students’ observations that podcasts provided authentic materials and engaging listening tasks, thereby increasing their motivation to learn English, and recommended that teachers make greater use of podcasts in teaching listening (Abdulrahman et al., 2018, p. 23). McBride explored the potential of how podcasts, which are not specifically produced for SLA, can be a rich source of cultural and pragmatic information that can motivate learners to become more autonomous. The researcher also explored what practices could be used to promote listening comprehension, intercultural competence, vocabulary building and collaboration (McBride, 2009).

### **3. Language learning and the development of a set of competences**

One of the recommendations of the Council of Europe is that educational practices should be transformed to incorporate key competences for democratic and lifelong learning, so that learners can reach their full potential and meet their diverse needs (RFCDC, 2018, p. 32; KCFLLL, 2019, p. 5). The idea of a *competent*

*individual* is based on the concept of *competence*, which is perceived as a dynamic process involving the selection, adaptation, coordination and application of an appropriate *set of competences* (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding) through behaviour in each situation and context. As one competence is usually an integral part of another, it is necessary to mobilize a set of competences to provide an adequate response to the specific challenges and opportunities, needs and goals of a person in a situation (RFCDC, 2018, pp. 32–33). For the purpose of this paper, listening skills, digital and media literacy, and intercultural understanding will be briefly presented, as defined in public and educational policies at international and national levels, and as discussed in academic articles.

### 3.1. Listening skills

Listening is a fundamental activity in language learning, although it has often been undervalued in comparison to speaking. As Vandergrift points out, the image of L2 listening has evolved from being perceived as a passive activity to an active process that is crucial to L2 learning. This shift is reinforced by learners' desire to understand spoken text in the target language and to interact with native speakers. The teaching of listening has also evolved. It has moved from the audio-lingual method of "listening to repeat" to "question-answer" comprehension and now emphasizes real-time, authentic communication, often with native speakers. Additionally, there is a move from focusing solely on listening outcomes to understanding the process itself. The same researcher proposes an integrative model of strategies for teaching L2 listening and comprehension, combining bottom-up processes (constructing meaning by gradually combining increasingly larger units of meaning) and top-down processes (using context and prior knowledge of topic, genre, culture, etc.) (2004, pp. 3–4).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides detailed descriptions of the development of receptive and productive -activities, with listening classified as a receptive activity. Listening comprehension involves understanding the interaction between other speakers, listening as a member of a live audience, listening to announcements and instructions, listening to audio media and recordings. The numerous aspects of this receptive activity represent different types of one-way listening compared to participating in a conversation, which is considered an interaction (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018, pp. 54–55). For the level being tested in this article, the basic descriptors of spoken reception, from the *listening to audio media and recordings* scale, are given:

„C1 level.

Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast audio material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers.

B2 level.

Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.

Can understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.

B1 level.

Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.

Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly. Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g., a description of a holiday), provided the speaker speaks slowly and clearly.” (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018, p. 59)

In foreign language teaching, the teacher should aim to ensure that the type and complexity of listening is appropriate to the spoken text being used, and that students gradually practice a wide range of these types. Starting from the listener's level of language and listening proficiency, and having in mind listener's goals, Field identifies several types of listening. On the one hand, the author distinguishes between shallow / medium / deep / very deep attentional focus. Applying each of these, while seeking to understand the global level of detail, one can engage in: listening generally (skimming); listening for action, and conversational listening, information exchange; close listening to establish the speaker's main points and connections between them; listening to check critical facts. On the other hand, if the listener aims to acquire a local level of detail, the listening implies: unfocused scanning to locate relevant information; focused scanning to locate a specific area of information; close listening to understand in depth the speaker's main points and supporting details, listening for important instruction, etc. (2009, pp. 65–66).

### 3.2. Digital literacy

The development and implementation of digital literacy strategies and frameworks is visible in many countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Strategy for the Development of Digital Literacy in Serbia 2020-2024, which is a continuation of the previous digital development frameworks in Serbia, is the government programme

“that comprehensively regulates the development of digital skills of the population with the aim of using the potential of modern information and communication technologies in the direction of raising the quality of life of all citizens, higher employment, work efficiency and economic growth of society.” (SRDVRS, 2020)

The definition of digital literacy in the Strategy 2020-2024 comes from the European Union’s strategies of development, therefore I will quote the definition given in 2006 and updated in 2018 by the European Commission’s recommendation documents:

“Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cyber-security), intellectual property related question, problem solving and critical thinking.” (KCFLL, 2019, p. 10)

The *Digital Competence Framework for Citizens* (DigComp 2.2) defines digital competence as interconnected with other types of key competences for lifelong learning: languages; literacy; cultural awareness and expression; entrepreneurship; civic competence; personal, social, and learning to learn; science, technology, engineering, mathematical competences. The Framework is based on the common global understanding that digital skills are developed through the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and it provides descriptors for five areas of competence, covering different levels of proficiency: foundational, intermediate, advanced, and highly specialized. It is important to note that the development and improvement of digital skills is implemented through education, training, lifelong learning and in the context of employment (Vourikari et al., 2022, pp. 1–8).

### 3.3. Media literacy

Media literacy is one of the strategic priorities of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 in Europe, which recognizes that media skills should be strengthened in order to empower citizens to participate fully in today's societies, to make informed decisions and choices offered by different information and communication technologies (European Commission, 2023, p. 1).

In the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, the Council of Europe provides a definition of what constitutes knowledge and critical understanding of the media and what it entails: 1) the processes of selecting, interpreting and editing information, before disseminating it to the public, 2) the fact that mass media involve producers and customers, that producers as commercial entities have motives, intentions and goals when they create various digital content, 3) awareness of how digital media is produced, 4) awareness of the impact that digital media content can have on individual judgements and behaviour, 5) awareness of the existence and identification of political messages and hate speech in both mass and digital media, as well as strategies for individuals to protect themselves from the influence of such information (RFCDC, 2018, p. 56).

It is recommended that all EU Member States engage in awareness-raising campaigns to promote and develop media literacy skills in formal education curricula at different levels, as a separate course, and/or across subjects, with particular attention to the continuous professional development of teachers. It should also include non-formal education, lifelong learning, including media literacy weeks, campaigns and training activities targeted at specific population groups, etc. (European Commission, 2023, p. 4).

The quoted guidelines of the European Commission are part of various recommendations and decisions of the Government in Serbia, as can be read in the *Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia for the Period from 2020 to 2025*, which calls for a change in the current trends in the public information system and includes the improvement of existing educational programmes and the creation of new programmes that contribute to the improvement of media literacy within formal education (SRSJI 2020-2025). It is also part of the vision of the development of education in Serbia, which is based on the need to develop the culture of lifelong learning, the transformation of education towards critical thinking, media and digital literacy etc. (SROVRS 2030, p. 27).

### 3.4. Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence involves the capacity to communicate and function across different cultural boundaries and contexts. This competence



integrates theoretical insights with practical engagement, promoting lifelong learning and openness. It comprises a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding that enable individuals and organizations to participate actively in intercultural settings. Intercultural competence entails engaging in dialogue to address prejudice and stereotypes. Essential to this proficiency are soft skills such as empathy, dignity, equality, respectful interaction and awareness of one's own cultural influences (Council of Europe 2023, pp. 9-10). As intercultural competence involves an understanding of its concepts relevant to different sectors, and as its definition has been refined over the last decades, I quote in this article the one developed in the framework of plurilingual and inter-/pluricultural education:

“Pluriculturality denotes the ability to participate in different cultures, *inter alia* by acquiring several languages. Interculturality denotes the ability to experience otherness and diversity, analyse that experience and derive benefit from it. The intercultural competence acquired from doing this helps individuals to understand otherness better, establish cognitive and affective links between past and future experiences of that otherness, mediate between members of different social groups, and question the assumptions of their own cultural group and milieu” (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 20–21).

Intercultural competence is developed through everyday practice and lifelong education. Numerous policies and recommendations have also emphasized its importance in Serbia. The development of intercultural competence is a recommendation of the Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia 2030, and includes the accreditation of programmes aimed at intercultural education, the application of an interdisciplinary approach in regular classes, extracurricular activities, support for teachers from minority communities who write textbooks and manuals, professional training of teachers in order to improve the intercultural approach and the educational role of the school, especially when it comes to educational programmes for minority communities, or within the implementation of the Serbian as a foreign language programme (SROVRS 2030, p. 24, 34, 39, 72).

#### **4. Description of the case study**

##### **4.1. Romanian Studies at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia**

The Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade is the oldest academic institution of its kind in the region and the largest in Serbia, with more than 7.500 active students at all three levels of study. Today, the Faculty of Philology teaches

more than 35 foreign languages and related literatures and cultures, as well as Serbian language and literature, librarianship and informatics, general literature and literary theory, linguistic disciplines. The curricula of the Faculty are organized at the B.A. level into 4 programmes and 28 modules, at the M.A. level into 6 programmes and 18 modules, and at the Ph.D. level into one programme with 3 modules.

An integral part of this extensive linguistic and cultural repertoire is the Department of Romanian Language, Literature and Culture. Romanian language was first introduced as an elective course in 1963, but it soon expanded into a full diploma curriculum, which today includes undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies. The relevance of the department is heightened when viewed in the context of the geopolitical dynamics between Serbia and Romania as neighbouring countries. Beyond the promotion of linguistic proficiency, it delves deeply into the intertwined historical, socio-political, and cultural narratives that illuminate the broader European experience they share. The Romanian Studies Programme at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade is open to all students<sup>3</sup>, but the majority are non-native, new learners of Romanian as a foreign language with Serbian as their L1. The occasional enrolment of students from Romanian, Vlach or other ethnolinguistic backgrounds further enriches academic discussions and fosters linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom.

In line with the Bologna Process, the Romanian Studies curriculum has been aligned with contemporary accreditation standards at national and international levels. The curriculum connects knowledge and a set of competences, values and attitudes, with the aim of enabling students to communicate and create meaning (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018), with the requirements for plurilingual and intercultural education (Beacco, 2007; Beacco et al., 2016), as well as with the descriptors of competences for democratic culture (RFCDC, 2018). Digital and media literacy has not yet been specified in learning outcomes, and this paper aims to explore the interconnectedness of these literacies with plurilingualism, pluri-/interculturality and citizenship competences. This objective is in line with the Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia 2030, Strategy for the Development of Digital Skills in Serbia 2020-2024, and the UN Agenda for Education 2030, which promote relevant and quality education, closely linking academic life, economy, society, and culture. These documents also promote the use of digital context for a more creative and innovative approach to teaching, the inclusion of digital and media literacy in university curricula, which leads us to discuss about the implementation of podcasts in Romanian language teaching resources.

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<sup>3</sup> Romanian can be studied as a minority language (L1) at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, in northern Serbia.

## 4.2. Potential benefits of using podcasts in Romanian language teaching

The production of textbooks for teaching Romanian as a foreign language has evolved significantly over the last few decades. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with Romania's transition to democracy, and its integration into the European Union in 2007, there was an increased emphasis on promoting Romanian language and culture abroad. This policy included the creation of textbooks that adopted a more communicative approach, focusing on real-life interactions and cultural immersion, authentic materials alongside literature extracts, etc. In addition, the Bologna Process in Europe led to a greater emphasis on aligning the content of Romanian language textbooks with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, thus ensuring standardization and comparability across European countries. In the academic programme on Romanian Language, Literature and Culture, offered by the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, the existing textbooks serve as basic teaching materials. However, given the complexity of the curriculum and the considerable number of classes of Romanian per week (from 10 to 18, depending on the year of study), the teaching staff develop additional materials in order to meet the diverse requirements of the curriculum.

An invaluable strategy and support in this context comes from the teachers' collaboration in different projects, and this article is based on two of them. Firstly, the Erasmus + Quality in Language Learning (QuILL) project provided a starting point, having in mind the uneven development of pedagogical materials and methods for teaching all EU languages. This is particularly true for learning based on digital resources and specialized terminology for less taught languages. In order to overcome these shortcomings, the main objectives of the QuILL project are to provide teachers of all EU official languages (for special purposes) in higher education with the skills to identify, use, evaluate and create foreign language teaching resources based on Information and Communication Technology (ICT); to provide language teachers with materials that would improve the quality of the use of digital resources in teaching; to participate in the creation of an open database for the teaching of EU languages, etc.

The task of the author of this article was to use the assigned digital resource – a RFI podcast on human rights – to create a lesson for the Romanian language. The aim was to integrate the lesson into classes with students in Belgrade in order to test it. The lesson focused on developing the students' specialized vocabulary and listening skills in the field of law and international politics, the ability to extract relevant information from such spoken texts, and the development of critical thinking.

### 4.3. Strategy for including podcasts in the Romanian language curriculum

The teacher used a podcast from Radio France Internationale, “a French news and current affairs public radio that broadcasts worldwide in French and in 16 other languages”, including Romanian, across the globe as part of the France Médias Monde. RFI draws on the expertise of its Paris-based editorial team and a unique network of 400 correspondents of 64 different nationalities. Through news bulletins, reports, magazines and debates, its journalists and correspondents aim to offer viewers, listeners, and Internet users a comprehensive coverage of global events, with a focus on cultural diversity and contrasting points of view.<sup>4</sup>

The podcast, entitled *Drepturile omului nu au regresat niciodată atât de mult*, was created by journalist Vasile Damian in standard Romanian language and posted online on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021: <https://podcast.rfi.ro/raport-onu-drepturile-omului-nu-au-regresat-niciodata-atat-de-mult/>. As mentioned, the podcast features the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> UN Security Council meeting in 2021.

The podcast lasts 3 minutes and 4 seconds and, according to Newman and Gallo (2019, p. 6), could be classified as “a brief bulletin, typically ranging from 1 to 5 minutes in duration”, which “predominantly target younger and more varied audiences, groups that have proven elusive through traditional linear broadcasting channels”. The podcast takes a factual approach, the language follows academic conventions of journalistic style. It is formal and precise, the structure is clear and logical, the spoken text is free of grammatical errors. The sound is clear and of high quality. The transcript of the podcast is available on the RFI website, but on the part of the site that transmits written text news, which could be a minor drawback.

One of the objectives set for the teacher in the QuILL project was the development of a specialized dictionary in the field of human rights, and the acquisition of knowledge in the field of law and international politics. The source in question is rich in specialized terminology in this field and requires a high level of grammatical knowledge in order to understand the content, all of which makes this material suitable for students whose knowledge of Romanian is at CEFR levels B2/C1. As one of the participants was at B1 level, the modified tasks were also tested at this level. During the lesson, the teacher guided the students through a model of integrated language learning and non-linguistic content learning, in accordance with the CLIL method (Marsh, 2002, p. 58) and the CEFR descriptors (2018), in a digital context.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information, see the Radio France Internationale website: <https://www.rfi.fr/en/about-us>.

#### 4.4. Participants and methodology

The lesson was created, applied and tested during the winter term, in the Romanian language workshop specially created for this purpose, on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It was attended by 7 students, aged between 21 and 25, enrolled in the B.A. and M.A. programmes at the Romanian Language and Literature Department, at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade.

Five students had no previous knowledge of the Romanian language before enrolling at the Faculty. Two students had previous contact with different varieties of Romanian: one student was born in Romania and completed the first years of primary school there, the other student was born in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in northern Serbia and learnt the local Banat variety of Romanian at home. The group was heterogeneous in terms of the students' ethnolinguistic backgrounds. It consisted of four students with Serbian ethnolinguistic background and three students from mixed families (Serbian/Romanian from Romania, Serbian/Romanian from Vojvodina, and Serbian/Vlach from Eastern Serbia).

Among the students there were 5 M.A. students whose knowledge of Romanian was at C1 level. Parallel to their M.A. studies, all of them are employed and use Romanian to a greater or lesser extent in their work, including legal terminology. Students from the B.A. programme also took part in the workshop: one student at B2 level, and one student at B1 level, whose motivation in learning Romanian led the teacher to assume that the student could successfully join a class where a higher level of language proficiency is expected.

The implementation and testing of the lesson consisted of two activities: organizing and participating in a lesson and completing two questionnaires after the lesson, one for the students and one for the teacher. The students were informed beforehand about the project, the type of research and tasks they would be doing in workshop, the questionnaire they would be filling in, and that the teacher intended to write a research paper based on the research done. All the students participated voluntarily and before the start of the class they registered by e-mail to take part in the class.

The class lasted 90 minutes and, due to the pandemic, was held online on the academic platform Moodle, and on the communication platform Zoom. At the end of the class, all participants filled in the questionnaires that had been prepared beforehand within the QuILL project and were sent to the author of the paper together with the digital resource and the assignment. The questions concerned technical aspects of using podcasts, appropriateness of the content, relevance of the information to the university level, impact on students' motivation, pedagogical-psychological-methodological aspects, compliance of the digital resources with CEFR levels and descriptors, as well as the possibility of using them for improvement / testing at levels [B1], B2 and C1. In this paper, the students' answers are represented by the sequence S1-S7 (Student 1 - Student 7).

## 5. Results and discussion of the case study

### 5.1. Listening comprehension

Students had to listen to a podcast and complete the tasks. The specific listening tasks included understanding the main points of the news, locating essential and specific information related to the relevant area and recognizing different perspectives and opinions mentioned in the news. An explicit teaching strategy was used to implement the tasks. This involved the teacher naming the strategy, outlining its contribution to comprehension and accurate task completion, and providing a demonstration and application (Oxford, 2011, p. 181). The procedure used included pre-listening activities, listening tasks and post-listening activities.

**Pre-listening activities.** Due to the limited time available for the lesson, the teacher extracted the key terms related to human rights for the purpose of the workshop. Firstly, the students read and solved the pre-listening tasks by linking the legal term (column A) with the definition of the term (column B). On the basis of these definitions, the extracted term was accompanied by an equivalent in the Serbian language. Secondly, the students tested their understanding of the technical terms in the context of sentences from authentic materials in the target language in which the word was missing (i.e. they had to adequately connect 10 sentences and 10 technical terms). The above-mentioned tasks were aimed at activating the legal vocabulary previously learnt and getting to know the new one, bearing in mind that technical terminology aims to provide “the most precise description of the phenomena and subjects in question” (Celac, 2021, p. 233).

The implementation of the lesson shows that the pre-listening tasks, which checked the knowledge already acquired by the students at C1 level, confirmed a high level of knowledge of legal terminology, and the tasks that extended the legal vocabulary were successfully solved; on average, 92% of the tests were solved correctly. For B2 level students, in addition to specialized terminology, the tasks additionally focused on general vocabulary; on average, 88% of the tests were answered correctly. In order to properly understand the legal terminology of the text and to acquire new knowledge at B1 level, it was necessary to add grammar exercises, in addition to the general and specialized vocabulary exercises. On average, the student was able to complete 85% of the test with repeated listening, which is explained by the fact that there was a lot of new information for a B1 level student.

The analysis of Q1 shows that the pre-listening activities were successful due to several factors. Firstly, the outcomes of this lesson are complementary to the outcomes of the curriculum, which provides Romanian language students

in Belgrade with knowledge of terminology and technical translation procedures and strategies. Students were able to connect legal terms from the lesson with legal texts already lexically processed in regular classes through the main subject, “Contemporary Romanian Language”, or from a subject dealing with “Translation for specific purposes”, where UN documents or the Constitution of Romania or Serbia or other legal documents are used. The answers to Q2 show the same logic: *During my education I have already been in contact with vocabulary for specific purposes, so learning new words from different fields is not new to me* (S3); *I would like to become a court interpreter one day, so now I am even more motivated to learn Romanian for specific purposes* (S4)

Additionally, during the lesson the teacher used different strategies and activities of linguistic, pedagogical, cultural and social mediation, giving additional information about the legal issues discussed in the podcast, about human rights, about international organizations that monitor the way human rights are respected in different countries, about communities and regions mentioned in the news. The goal of these brief discussions was to spark interest and motivate students to engage with the topic, as well as to reduce anxiety about listening and communicating on sensitive topics. Q2 offers the same perspective: *As I work in a UN agency, I find this topic particularly interesting professionally, but I think it is interesting for everyone* (S1).

The analysis of Q1 also shows that this podcast could be used to develop other skills, such as speaking and writing. It provides an opportunity for collaboration and mediation, so that students in advanced years could share their knowledge of legal terms with younger students, but also to express reactions to the podcast and the lesson itself, to comment on various issues of contemporary society, culture and media, and to learn specialized terminology (cf. North & Piccardo, 2016). The results of Q2 confirm that: *I would like this workshop to last for two modules, so that we can talk more and have more discussions with other colleagues. It was so interesting to hear other opinions, and then we would have more time* (S4).

**Listening activities.** Before listening, students read the exercise to check the vocabulary and terms used in the task. They listened to the podcast three times, following the procedure adapted from Hulstijn (2003, p. 422). First, the students listened without interruption to gain a general understanding of the podcast, with medium attentional focus. Secondly, the recording was replayed to complete the exercises. In column A, students were given a list of specific human right issues mentioned in the report and had to listen with deep attentional focus to relate them to specific regions or communities. For B1 and B2 level students it was a multiple-choice question. Students at C1 level had to listen with very deep



attentional focus and write down specific terms and phrases related to human rights; the answers were not given in advance.

- A) Students at level C1 had no difficulty in understanding the podcast without pausing, achieving an average accuracy of 93% in exercises dealing with sensitive human rights issues in the news. The students' ability to recognize sensitive points and nuances in the podcast content confirms their good grasp of legal terminology, acquired not only through their Romanian Studies curriculum in Belgrade, but also through their current employment, where they use legal vocabulary in everyday activities.
- B) The B2-level students were also asked to listen to the podcast without pausing as part of their exercise. This task was completed with an average accuracy of 90%, suggesting that the high-quality recording in standard language, coupled with the students' exposure to the topic of human rights in either their university or personal lives, contributed to the correct responses.
- C) The B1-level students were required to listen to a 20-30 second segment of a news recording that specifically highlighted the answer. The responses were 90% accurate. A B1-level student may have more difficulty when attempting to listen to unfamiliar academic topics due to a lack of exposure to the topic as it has not yet been covered in the curriculum. However, as the news report was delivered in clear, concise language and focused on short, isolated segments, the student was able to understand and retain the essential details. Furthermore, the B1-level students found it easier to complete the exercises after several repeated listenings, as they were struggling with the greatest amount of new information.  
Thirdly, the students listened to the podcast to check and correct their answers.

**Post-listening activities.** These activities included teacher observation and discussion with students and completion of the Q1 and Q2. Overall, after the Q1, the high success rate in the tasks can be attributed to the fact that most students relied on their pre-existing linguistic and lexical knowledge, as well as on their assumptions about the text: This tendency was particularly evident among C1 students, according to the results and Q2: *I think that the pronunciation of the narrator, the vocabulary and the grammar exercises were very useful and helped me to understand the podcast more easily. I don't know about less advanced levels, but I didn't have any difficulty understanding the podcast, either as a*



*whole or as individual pieces of information. But I would single out the vocabulary as the most useful part of this listening (S1).* Additionally, the relevance of the topic increased their motivation to succeed in understanding the podcast, and the serious nature of the news made them listen more attentively: *I liked the podcast because it mentioned some information I had never heard before (S6).* Their anxiety decreased and their confidence increased as they were gradually introduced to more difficult tasks: *When I first found out about the topic, I didn't think I would like it. But the explanations of the new terms were useful and interesting, so I did all the tasks with confidence and then the topic became more and more interesting, that's why I liked it (S4).*

## **5.2. Recommendations for future practice**

Initially, digital, media and intercultural skills were not on the list of outcomes for the lesson, but teachers were invited to suggest additional activities and skills development based on each digital resource. Below, I will present some examples of additional lesson development, based on the podcast in question.

### **5.2.1. Digital and media skills development**

The development of digital and media skills is crucial for today's students, as it contributes to personal fulfilment and a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. It also prepares them for the professional world, enhances their academic experience and fosters essential competences such as collaboration, analytical and critical thinking, adaptability, and lifelong learning.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in the following I will share some observations on the connection of digital competences and the development of language repertoires that were visible during or after the workshop.

Before the workshop started, all the students were equipped with the necessary hardware and software tools and technology at home, using a PC/laptop, camera, microphone, and headphones for interactive work during the workshop. They all had access to the internet at home. In the following I will present the findings from Q1 and Q2 and the discussion on which knowledge, skills and attitudes could be developed or improved within five areas of digital competence, according to Vourikari et al., (2022, p. 3), which include: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem-solving.

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<sup>5</sup> As empirical research shows, the main weakness for industry in Romania, according to Buica and Dragan, is the low digital skills of employees, which is related to the low performance of 15-year-old students in Romania on PISA tests (Buica & Dragan, 2017, pp. 454–461). Similar results on PISA tests apply to Serbia, according to which 15-year-old students scored lower than the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science (Кузмановић, 2022, p. 65). See also: OECD, Data for Romania (2018); OECD, Data for Serbia (2018).

**Information and data literacy.** The students were instructed by the teacher to access the workshop on the academic platform Moodle and to navigate through the various tasks related to the podcast. The lesson began with the teacher introducing the RFI website and its content, spending a few minutes discussing the credibility and reliability of the online information source. During the workshop, the teacher observed that the students were highly skilled at navigating the Moodle platform. However, an additional discussion on checking the reliability of sources, on the use of AI algorithms by content platforms, could be helpful for the students' academic work, in their future workplaces, and for them as active citizens, in their social contexts (Vourikari et al., 2022, p. 10). Suggestions for further development of teaching would include combining data and media literacy to enable students to think critically and analytically about complex issues and to understand the difference between opinion and fact (European Commission, 2023, p. 1). Critical media literacy could also include discussions of **media messages as constructs** that create powerful images and identifications that influence attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles (Kellner, 1995).

The analysis of the results from Q1 and Q2 shows that the questionnaires are fully dedicated to evaluating the potential of the digital resource in question to be used as a pedagogical tool in foreign language teaching, but there were no explicit questions on digital literacy. The only exception was the question about the technical aspects of using podcasts. Although empirical studies show that podcasts are one of the most convenient digital media to use today, students gave them a score of 4 (on the scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest). Due to the pandemics, it is possible to interpret such scores as mixed feelings of saturation with online learning, followed by many positive comments about podcasts in other questions, as will be presented further in this paper.

**Communication and collaboration.** Students used various digital resources to participate in this online workshop at an advanced level. As the analysis of Q1 shows, after accepting the invitation to the class and receiving the instructions for the workshop via email, all participants used the video conferencing tool Zoom to participate in the live class session and discussions. Additionally, to access the lesson materials, assignments, and feedback questionnaires, the academic platform Moodle was the most appropriate and familiar digital tool, which was part of blended learning before the pandemic. Due to some technical problems, two students had to navigate to the RFI website, to do the listening activities. Usually, this type of lesson requires the use of online dictionaries and databases of documents relevant to the domain of the text, which enhances digital multitasking skills. However, due to the short time available, these were not used on this occasion.

Overall, the students acted skillfully, as they use the aforementioned digital technologies on a daily basis in their routine interactions with teachers. Although Q2 did not include questions on communication and collaboration between students, the teacher has observed that they demonstrated good social skills and behavioural norms in a digital environment. In their answers, students have spontaneously mentioned cooperation and willingness to listen to each other's opinions: *The podcast is especially good for working with colleagues because everyone can overlook something, so we complement each other in this way* (S6).

**Digital content creation.** The learning outcomes of this lesson did not imply that the students were involved in the creation of digital content, but that they actively took part in the tasks created by the teacher. As the analysis of the basic demographic data shows, the students were in their advanced or final years of B.A. or in the M.A. studies, they had already made informed observations about the pedagogical and methodological process of content editing. The Q2 comments also confirm that students were able to evaluate how the pre-existing digital source can influence attitudes towards learning: *Some of the facts I heard about respect of rights in other countries are new to me, the podcast has motivated me to research this area more* (S3). It could also serve as a starting point for tailoring tasks and the creation of new, contextually relevant knowledge. The teacher assumes that the M.A. students who have completed the course on the "Methodology of teaching Romanian language" could repeat the process themselves and prepare the lesson for someone else: *The advantage of this podcast is that it can be adapted to everyone with different exercises* (S3).

Other suggestions would be to offer students opportunities to become creators of digital content, for example, their own podcast on human rights in today's world or other real-life problems through project-based learning. Inclusion and promotion of complex digital skills in university curricula seems necessary, considering empirical findings from research on digital literacy of young people in Serbia, the quality of time spent online and the type of activity, as demonstrated in Kuzmanović's article. Namely, the internet is mostly used for fun activities, while only 5% of young people in Serbia had used digital tools to express themselves in different digital formats, to create content such as music, video, or website by the end of compulsory education (Кузмановић, 2022, p. 64).

**Safety.** The analysis of the teachers' observations in Q1 shows that the students, although frustrated, made many comments about how they had learned to be more patient with technical problems during the lesson. However, in Q2 they also expressed regret that the class could not be held offline: *The weak side of this workshop was the online aspect, unfortunately* (S7); *I wish the class had been*

*organized at the Faculty rather than online (S4).* Therefore, the lesson could be used to discuss the risk of spending excessive time online for personal, academic, or professional purposes and its effects on physical and mental wellbeing. It could also be interpreted in terms of understanding the advantages and the appropriateness of online learning during the pandemics (UNESCO Report, 2023, pp. 9–11). According to DigComp 2.2, understanding how to protect personal data and privacy, how to use and share personal information without harm is highly important in the digital age. The issue of cyber-bullying is another danger that could be debated in relation to health protection in digital environments. On the one hand, the use of digital resources could raise awareness on not printing teaching materials and its impact on the environment. On the other hand, it could address the subject of pollution caused by digital devices after they are no longer used (Vourikari et al., 2022, pp. 35–42).

**Problem-solving.** During the lesson, the teacher facilitated the podcast playback. However, as the analysis of Q1 shows, two students demonstrated problem-solving skills by searching for and accessing the podcast directly from the RFI site: one to solve technical problems with the headphones, and the other with the speed of the speech. The latter had to adapt the listening repetitions to individual needs. Additionally, if students listened to the podcast alone at home, they could use the corresponding news transcript to confirm their success in understanding the text they had heard. During the workshop, the students demonstrated skills such as proactive problem-solving and adaptability, but Q2 also highlights the importance of individuality in learning for the students in question: *The advantage of the lesson is the variety of tasks, topics that hold the attention even of those who are not interested in it, but what I liked the most was the gradual development of activities from less to more advanced levels of knowledge, and it's interesting to see how far we can go (S6); I liked the fact that the tasks were adapted to all levels of knowledge (S7).*

Keeping in mind that philology students learn languages for professional purposes, which include specialized terminology and translation, a future lesson plan could include the proficient use of machine translation, such as Google Translate, DeepL, or simultaneous interpretation apps, e.g. iTranslate, the use of online dictionaries, or memory engines, corpus databases etc. As Romanian is a less commonly taught language and a less commonly translated one by machines, due to the commercial prioritization of AI, this means that students could recognize when machine translation does not perform well, especially if the errors are sophisticated, and when the content requires a more precise translation (e.g. medical, legal, financial documents, etc.). Creating their own dictionary is part of the Romanian Studies curriculum and could be the next step in the development of this lesson, as problem-solving and digital content creation.

### 5.2.2. Intercultural skills development

The podcast served as an authentic source of information, introducing students to real-life issues within a specific socio-cultural context. The news format and the gravity of the UN report encouraged students to take the issues discussed seriously. The analysis of Q2 showed that students were interested in the topic they were listening to: *I think it was very useful in the context of general culture and knowledge of the situation in the world* (S1). After listening to the podcast, the students engaged in brief discussions about the topic, showing intercultural sensitivity, and a willingness to better understand human rights: *For me, some of the facts I heard were new, about the respect of human rights in other countries, I will research this topic a bit more, for myself* (S3); *I would include more discussions with other colleagues, it would be interesting to hear other opinions* (S4). One specific comment led the teacher to suggest that the podcast could not only provide a perspective on students' intercultural competence in the global context, but also provide an entry point for in-depth exploration of local and regional issues of interculturality: *It could also contain some information about our countries, which are closer to us, then the data would have been more interesting to know and remember, because these countries mentioned in Africa and Asia are rarely part of the daily news* (S2). In a separate module(s), different areas of intercultural competence could be addressed, based on the second project, Vulnerable Languages and Linguistic Varieties in Serbia (VLingS), which I will briefly present.

**Knowledge.** Serbia is one of the few European countries to have legally confirmed its linguistic and cultural wealth. Serbian is the L1 language for the majority of the population and is the official language of the Republic of Serbia (Constitution of Serbia, 2006, Article 10). The foundations of today's language policy were laid after the First World War in Yugoslavia and further improved after the Second World War. Given that Yugoslavia was characterized by many different ethnolinguistic communities, the discourse of Yugoslavia's language policy can be connected to the policy of pluralism, whose key value was tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of different languages and communities. The linguistic rights of the citizens of Yugoslavia were regulated by the Constitution of Yugoslavia and the relevant laws, as well as by the observance of international charters, conventions, recommendations related to the use of the languages of national minorities in education, culture, the legal system, the media, etc. The Republic of Serbia is the legal successor of Yugoslavia, and therefore language rights in Serbia today are also characterized by a highly interactive ideological model that implies the cooperation of speakers of all languages on the principle of equality (Bugarski, 2005, p. 96). Serbia is also a signatory to the European Charter for Regional and

Minority Languages, based on which, in the multilingual and multicultural regions of Serbia, 10 regional and minority languages have special legal protection (Part II and III of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages). These are: Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Hungarian, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak and Ukrainian. In addition, five other languages and language varieties have general legal protection under Part II of the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages: German, Czech, Macedonian, and the Bunjevac and Vlach varieties (Ćorković, 2019, p. 263). In addition to the above-mentioned languages and varieties, other languages are also used in Serbia that do not have the status of an official minority language, such as Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, Banat-Bulgarian, the study of which is included in the V LingS project.

**The value of linguistic and cultural diversity.** The V LingS project is based on the idea that all languages preserve the past, the linguistic and cultural heritage of the communities that speak them. For this reason, language endangerment has been a focus of interest for scholars in recent decades, who have actively contributed to the work of documenting, preserving and revitalizing languages, and to raising awareness of the need to preserve linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. To this end, databases are being created on all the world's languages, recording their various characteristics, and red books and lists of languages in danger of extinction are being made. These databases provide detailed records of thousands of vulnerable or endangered languages, and are available to decision-makers, communities and experts working to protect linguistic diversity across the planet. In their study on vulnerable and endangered languages and language varieties, however, Sorescu-Marinković, Mirić and Ćirković pointed out that existing databases, such as the UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, the Ethnologue and The Catalogue of Endangered Languages, often provide insufficient and inaccurate information on the varieties spoken in Serbia, that they assess the level of their linguistic vulnerability and endangerment in different ways, while the presented data is often not accompanied by an empirical basis (Sorescu-Marinković et al., 2020, pp. 66–67).

**Skills.** Through their education, students should acquire various skills that will be useful in the culture of democracy, in their personal lives and in the professional world. Some of these skills are: plurilingualism, pluriculturality, analytical and critical skills, cooperation and quality communication skills, flexibility, empathy, listening and observation, and they are used by the members of the V LingS team at all stages of the project. To illustrate the above, the V LingS objectives could be presented to the students. One of the main aims of the project is to create a key tool – a sociolinguistic *V LingS Questionnaire*, for assessing

the degree of endangerment and vulnerability of the languages and language varieties covered by the project, and to apply it to a statistically relevant number of speakers in Serbia. It was originally created by the members of the project and consists of 15 sections with questions eliciting a variety of information based on the respondents' personal experience with the languages and linguistic varieties in question: Aromanian, Banat Bulgarian, Bayash Romanian, Judezmo (Ladino), Megleno-Romanian, Romani (Vlax and Balkan varieties), Vlach, Vojvodina Rusyn (Ruthenian). The Questionnaire was used in the pilot project within the language communities from May to October 2022, and in the main research, from May to October 2023. In parallel with filling in the questionnaire, the team members recorded narratives in the languages and language varieties mentioned, which provided a way of documenting and archiving language samples from different generations. Finally, an interactive online map will be created based on the data collected, which will provide a precise insight into the vulnerability of certain varieties in the communities studied. In addition, by writing scientific articles and participating in scientific conferences, the project aims to provide support to language communities, non-governmental organizations and the government, as well as the education sector, in raising awareness of the need to preserve the linguistic heritage in Serbia, and to support their efforts to revitalize the minority languages and varieties mentioned. It could also serve as a reliable tool for assessing language vulnerability around the world.

**Understanding.** The findings of the V LingS project fieldwork could be used as a starting point for discussions on various concepts, such as *identity*, *culture*, *interculturality*, *intercultural dialogue*, etc. After presenting the results of the questionnaires and recorded narratives, teachers could lead a discussion on the importance of self-knowledge and understanding of one's own cultural belonging, about understanding of one's own perspective on the world, and the ideas behind our perspectives.<sup>6</sup> Debates could also include a critical understanding of how cultural affiliations shape one's worldview, perceptions, beliefs, values, behaviours; understanding that cultural groups are diverse and that within them there are variations and individuals who oppose traditional meanings; that groups are constantly changing; understanding how power structures can open or close opportunities for individuals and groups; understanding the beliefs, norms and practices of people they came into contact with, who belong to cultures different from their own; understanding the power and responsibility of the media in presenting information, etc. (RFCDC, 2018, pp. 52–56).

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<sup>6</sup> For example, one of the results of the Project is the paper on different perceptions of the term "mother tongue" among the communities encompassed by the V LingS project: M. Mirić et al., *Mother tongue in Serbia: minority language speakers' perspective on the meaning of the concept* (forthcoming).



**Attitudes.** The analysis of the results of the project could create intercultural situations that would improve intercultural dialogue. Intercultural situations occur when an individual or a group perceives another person or group as belonging to a different culture from their own. Such situations can involve people from other countries, from different regions, from different ethnolinguistic groups or religious communities, or people who differ in lifestyle, age, generation, social class, education, etc. Such situations call for intercultural dialogue, which implies openness to cultural difference, to different beliefs, values, worldviews and practices. Openness implies both curiosity and interest in discovering and learning about other cultures and their values, without judgement. An open attitude also includes respect for others, awareness of the dignity and equality of all people, which does not mean that differences are diminished. Openness implies a civic attitude towards the community, ranging from an understanding of the interconnectedness of all people, through solidarity with others, to cooperation, concern for others and a willingness to contribute actively to community life, etc. It also implies a self-confident and responsible attitude towards obligations, appropriate decision-making, participation in activities, responsible acceptance of the consequences and the willingness to act courageously when deemed necessary. Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards situations in which there are multiple interpretations that are incompatible, while an individual or group manages to maintain a constructive attitude towards them, accepting the existence of different perspectives (RFCDC, 2018, pp. 30–31, 41–45).

In societies that are constantly changing and adapting, it is important to promote and accept diversity in all its aspects, which would have a positive impact on the quality of life, safety, well-being and economic prosperity of students.

## 6. Conclusions

The study highlights the potential of a professional podcast, which served as an authentic source of information in a Romanian as a foreign language class, introducing students to the real-world issues within a particular socio-cultural and geo-political context. The main pedagogical advantages of using a podcast in language teaching are its attractiveness to students, the motivational aspects of the material, the engaging tasks, the personalized aspect of learning, the possibility to improve a set of competences in one lesson or in several modules. However, to be effective, the success of podcasts integration should focus on developing teachers' ICT skills and creating appropriate learning outcomes for students.

The combination of the standard language delivery, the formal style of the news, the logical structure of the sentence, with the previous knowledge of language for specific purposes in the field of law and human rights, served



as a powerful combination of bottom-up and top-down processes that helped the students in the listening activities. The mix of pre-listening activities (brief introduction / discussion of the topic, pre-teaching of the new vocabulary and activation of existing vocabulary), listening activities (listening three times, for overall understanding of the podcast, for solving the exercises and for checking correct answers) and post-listening activities (discussion of tasks and topic, feedback from students and teacher) was crucial for successful listening comprehension. The gravity of the topic motivated the students to listen with deep attentional focus during the main listening activities, which also fostered their analytical listening skills. The podcast in question is suitable for students at C1 and B2 levels, but it can also be used at B1 level if it is preceded by additional preparatory tasks. At C1-level, students were able to identify subtle information and connections between them, confirming a good command of legal terminology. At B2-level, students were able to understand the main points and supporting details without any difficulty. The B1-level students had to listen to a smaller segment of the podcast that specifically highlighted the answer. They experienced more difficulties, possibly due to lack of exposure to the topic and the greatest amount of new information. The difficulties were overcome by repeating the listening several times.

Feedback from the teacher and students, collected through questionnaires, demonstrated that digital and media literacy could be easily integrated and assessed in the curriculum for Romanian Studies at university level, at different levels of proficiency, and in different areas of literacy. Students proved to be successful in navigating different online sources and platforms, and demonstrated good social skills and behavioural norms in an online environment. Additionally, their problem-solving skills were adequate, when it came to solving small technical problems during the class. However, additional tasks on digital content creation, proficient use of machine translation, online dictionaries and databases, checking the reliability of the sources of information, fact-checking the information, which is related to media literacy, could be useful for the personal development of the students and for their future professional lives. Similarly, the lesson could develop tasks dealing with safety issues in the digital context, such as safety of personal data, protection against cyber bullying, effects of excessive time spent online on wellbeing, etc.

The podcast is also a source of cultural information. The students' feedback suggested that the podcast could not only enhance their cultural competence in a global context, but also provide an entry point for teachers to explore local and regional issues of interculturality. Therefore, the article proposes the introduction of another project results, Vulnerable Languages and Linguistic Varieties in Serbia (VLingS), to contribute to different elements of intercultural

understanding and dialogue in the region. Firstly, it could contribute to students' knowledge of Serbia's commitment to the protection of human and linguistic rights, of the ideology of plurality behind the language policies. Secondly, it could emphasize the value of linguistic and cultural diversity, promoted by the project. Thirdly, the philology students could see the real use of the skills acquired during the education, and their application in different goals of the project, such as plurilingual and pluricultural skills, analytical, critical and communication skills, etc. Additionally, debates on the results of the project could be the basis for discussions of the concepts of identity, culture, interculturality, etc. Similarly, the results of the project could bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world, between mass media news and fieldwork research in the ethnolinguistic minorities in Serbia, creating new opportunities for intercultural dialogue, for showing openness, curiosity, interest, respect and responsibility in one's own and others' practices, worldviews, values and behaviours, in order to understand the interconnectedness of all people.

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**PODKAST U NASTAVI RUMUNSKOG JEZIKA: RAZVOJ KOMPETENCIJE SLUŠANJA, DIGITALNE I MEDIJSKE PISMENOSTI, INTERKULTURALNOG RAZUMEVANJA**

**Rezime**

Cilj rada je da ispita efikasnost podkasta u nastavi rumunskog jezika na univerzitetskom nivou, fokusirajući se na: razvoj rečnika i unapređenje veštine slušanja u domenu ljudskih prava na nivou B1, B2 i C1 (CEFR), unapređenje digitalne i medijske pismenosti, te interkulturalne kompetencije. Predmet analize je podkast (kratka dnevna vest) koji emituje Radio France Internationale (RFI) na rumunskom jeziku. CLIL metoda i interdisciplinarni pristup su bili osnova za pripremu lekcije.

Podkast kao izvor autentičnog materijala povezuje studente sa problemima iz stvarnog sveta u specifičnom društveno-kulturnom i geopolitičkom kontekstu. Rezultati sugerišu da su njegove glavne pedagoške prednosti tema koja motiviše, atraktivan format, raznovrsnost zadataka, personalizovani aspekt učenja, unapređenje niza kompetencija. Podkast na standardnom rumunskom jeziku i prethodno poznavanje jezika za posebne svrhe iz oblasti ljudskih prava, podstakli su studente na pažljivo, analitičko slušanje. Podkast je prikladan za studente B2 i C1 nivoa, dok je za B1 nivo potrebno više pripremnih vežbi. Uspješnom razumevanju slušanog teksta doprinela je ozbiljnost teme (Izveštaj UN o ljudskim pravima), kao i niz aktivnosti pre, tokom i posle slušanja (diskusija o temi, ponavljanje starog i učenje novog rečnika, povratne informacije studenata o zadacima i temi itd.).

Rezultati, takođe, pokazuju da su pojedine digitalne i medijske veštine već integrisane u rad sa podkastom (navigacija različitim onlajn platformama i izvorima informacija, dobre veštine komunikacije i onlajn saradnje itd.), dok se druge mogu dodatno integrisati u kurikulum (kreiranje digitalnog sadržaja, diskusije o bezbednosti, upotrebi onlajn baza podataka itd.). Pored toga, članak sugeriše da bi kombinovanje aktuelnih vesti iz mas medija sa podacima sa terenskog istraživanja o etnolingvističkim manjinama u Srbiji u okviru projekta V LingS, moglo dodatno produbiti interkulturalno razumevanje studenata kad je reč o ljudskim pravima i jezičkim pravima, ne samo na globalnom, već i na lokalnom nivou.

**Ključne reči:** podkast, rumunski kao strani jezik, obrazovne politike, razumevanje slušanja, digitalna pismenost, medijska pismenost, interkulturalna kompetencija

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## PODCASTURILE ȘI PREDAREA LIMBII ROMÂNE: DEZVOLTAREA ÎNȚELEGERII ORALE ȘI A COMPETENȚELOR DIGITALE, MEDIATICE ȘI INTERCULTURALE

### Rezumat

Scopul lucrării de față este de a examina eficiența podcasturilor în predarea limbii române ca limbă străină la nivel universitar, cu accent pe dezvoltarea vocabularului și îmbunătățirea deprinderilor de ascultare la nivelurile B1, B2 și C1 (CECR), în domeniul drepturilor omului, precum și pe îmbunătățirea competențelor digitale, mediatice și interculturale ale studenților. Subiectul analizat este un podcast difuzat de Radio France Internationale (RFI), care cuprinde știri zilnice scurte în limba română. La baza pregătirii lecției au stat metodele specific CLIL, precum și abordarea interdisciplinară.

Ca sursă de material autentic, podcastul îi conectează pe studenți cu diverse probleme din lumea reală, într-un context socio-cultural și geopolitic specific. Rezultatele cercetării sugerează că principalele sale avantaje pedagogice sunt: subiectul motivant, formatul atractiv, sarcinile diverse, aspectul personalizat al învățării, îmbunătățirea unor competențe. Limba română standard a podcastului, precum și cunoașterea prealabilă a termenilor din domeniul drepturilor omului i-au încurajat pe studenți să asculte cu atenție și spirit analitic. Podcastul este adecvat pentru studenții de nivel B2 și C1, iar folosirea sa la nivelul B1 necesită mai multe exerciții pregătitoare. Seriozitatea subiectului (Raportul ONU privind drepturile omului), precum și o serie de activități care au fost realizate înainte, în timpul și după ascultare (discuții pe marginea subiectului, activarea vocabularului vechi și învățarea celui nou, feedback-ul studenților cu privire la sarcini și subiect) au contribuit la înțelegerea cu succes a textului ascultat.

Rezultatele cercetării arată, de asemenea, că unele competențe digitale și mediatice sunt deja integrate în lucrul cu podcasturile (navigarea pe diferite platforme și surse de informare online, abilitățile de comunicare și colaborare online etc.), în timp ce altele pot fi integrate în continuare în curriculum (crearea de conținut digital, discuții despre siguranța online, utilizarea bazelor de date online etc.). Mai mult, articolul sugerează că, prin combinarea știrilor actuale din mass-media cu datele obținute în cercetarea de teren privind minoritățile etnolingvistice din Serbia, în cadrul proiectului V LingS, înțelegerea interculturală a studenților în ce privește drepturile omului și drepturile lingvistice, atât la nivel global, cât și la nivel local, ar putea fi dezvoltată și mai mult.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** podcasturi, limba română ca limbă străină (RLS), politică educațională, abilități de ascultare, alfabetizarea digitală, alfabetizarea mediatică, competență interculturală