Multimodal Assessment as a Pathway to Interaction, Reflection, and L2 Oral Competence

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ABSTRACT

This classroom-based study examines learners' perceptions of two innovative, learner-centered approaches to oral assessment implemented in advanced English courses at a public university in Argentina. Moving beyond traditional teacher-led interviews, the research explores how multimodal and reflective assessment formats may support students' development of oral competence, autonomy, and metacognitive awareness. Using a mixed-methods design, quantitative data from post-assessment questionnaires were analyzed alongside qualitative reflections to identify patterns of convergence and divergence across pedagogical dimensions. Results revealed consistently positive perceptions, with students highlighting the value of interaction, creativity, and self-reflection as key to improving their communicative performance. The findings suggest that multimodal, interaction-oriented assessment can transform assessment into a process of learning and engagement, offering a viable alternative to conventional testing practices.

Keywords: multimodal assessment; oral communication; learner autonomy; interactional competence; pronunciation pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The assessment of oral communication in second language education has long been dominated by teacher-led interviews and other highly controlled testing formats that emphasize linguistic accuracy over communicative authenticity. While these traditional methods ensure standardization and practicality, they often reduce oral performance to a one-dimensional demonstration of correctness, overlooking the social and interactive nature of communication (Fulcher, 2015; Shohamy, 2001). Current trends in communicative language teaching and assessment, however, call for more dynamic, learner-centered, and multimodal approaches that reflect the complexity of real language use. Within this evolving paradigm, assessment is reconceptualized as a formative and developmental process that supports learning, fosters autonomy, and promotes metacognitive awareness rather than serving merely as a summative endpoint.

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the integration of interactional competence, multimodality, and learner agency within oral assessment practices (Alshammari & Alruwaili, 2025; Byram, 2020; Kress, 2010; Jewitt, 2016; Swain, 2006). Oral performance is now understood as a co-constructed and multimodal act that combines linguistic, visual, gestural, and phonological features that jointly convey meaning. At the same time, empirical research in L2 pronunciation and speaking pedagogy underlines the importance of reflection, awareness, autonomy, and self-regulation as central to sustainable oral development (Luchini, 2024a; Luchini & Galante, 2024b; Aydan & Capa-Aydin, 2025; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010; Sardegna et al., 2017). Despite these theoretical advances, classroom assessment practices often remain monologic and examiner-driven, limiting opportunities for learners to engage collaboratively, interact authentically, or demonstrate multimodal competence.

Responding to this gap, the present study investigates learners' perceptions of two innovative oral assessment designs implemented in advanced-level English courses within a Teacher Education Program at a public university in Argentina. Both approaches are grounded in multimodal, reflective, and learner-centered pedagogies that reimagine oral assessment as a process of interaction and self-discovery. Using a mixed-methods design, the study explores how these assessment formats promote perceived development across linguistic, metacognitive, and affective dimensions, including autonomy, motivation, multimodality, and interaction. Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to identify convergences and divergences in learner perceptions. The article presents a theoretical framework, followed by the methodological design, results from both data strands, and a discussion linking findings to current theories of oral communication and assessment. It concludes with limitations, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rethinking Oral Assessment in Applied Linguistics

Traditional approaches to L2 oral assessment have typically relied on teacher–student interviews or structured oral examinations in which interaction is predetermined and asymmetrical. In these contexts, teachers act as assessors while learners respond within a restricted format, leaving little space for authentic negotiation of meaning or spontaneous interaction. Such methods, though institutionally convenient, have been widely criticized for their power imbalance and for reducing L2 oral competence to isolated features such as pronunciation or grammatical accuracy (Shohamy, 2001; Fulcher, 2015).

This asymmetry contrasts sharply with current perspectives that position L2 learning as a socially mediated process. Over the last two decades, scholars have advocated a shift toward interaction-based, process-oriented, and learner-centered assessment that reflects the dynamic and collaborative nature of oral communication (Byram, 2020; Dörnyei, 1994; Swain, 2006). These views suggest that L2 oral proficiency should no longer be conceived as an individual performance measured by an examiner, but rather as a co-constructed, multimodal, and reflective practice shaped by engagement, agency, and context (Alshammari & Alruwaili, 2025).

Interactional and Multimodal Perspectives on Oral Competence

The interactional turn in applied linguistics emphasizes that L2 development occurs through participation in dialogue and collaborative meaning-making. Swain's (2006) notion of *collaborative dialogue* and Byram's (2020) work on *intercultural communicative competence* underline the importance of negotiation, adaptability, and responsiveness in oral performance. In this view, interaction is both the *medium* and the *mechanism* of learning—where meaning is created jointly through verbal and non-verbal cues.

Concurrently, the multimodal turn in literacy studies (Kress, 2010; Jewitt, 2016; Jewitt et al., 2025) has expanded the understanding of communication by recognizing that meaning emerges through the interplay of linguistic, visual, gestural, and aural modes. Within

assessment, this approach entails attending not only to the linguistic realization of speech but also to how learners mobilize multiple semiotic resources to co-construct meaning and sustain interaction. Multimodal learning environments thus offer rich affordances for agency, as learners make design choices, manipulate media, and negotiate meaning through embodied and digital expression (Kress, 2010; Jewit et al., 2025)

Recent studies in multimodal pedagogy have shown that engaging learners in designing and performing with diverse modes contributes to enhancing participation, creativity, and communicative adaptability (Hampel, 2015, 2019; Hafner et al., 2015; Stickler et al., 2020). From this perspective, learner agency is not merely the capacity to act, but the ability to make semiotic choices that align with personal intentions and contextual demands. Consequently, multimodal and interactional approaches converge in positioning learners as active meaning-makers who shape, reflect upon, and assess their own communicative performances, as "meaning is made through the orchestration of multiple modes, where learners act as reflective designers and interpreters of communicative action" (Jewitt et al., 2025, p. 47).

Autonomy, Motivation, and Self-Regulation in Oral Learning

Theories of learner autonomy (Little, 1991) and self-regulation (Aydan & Capa-Aydin, 2025; Goh & Vandergrift, 2012; Zimmerman, 2002) provide a complementary foundation for rethinking L2 oral assessment. From this perspective, learners progress not by responding passively to external assessment, but by monitoring, reflecting on, and adjusting their own learning strategies (Sardegna et al., 2017). Dörnyei and Henry (2022) emphasize that autonomy and motivation are interdependent: when L2 learners exercise control over their materials and methods, they sustain greater engagement and ownership of learning outcomes.

Within the domain of pronunciation and oral fluency, research by Kennedy and Trofimovich (2010) and Sardegna et al. (2017) confirms that prosodic development largely depends on learners' capacity to notice, evaluate, and refine their own performance. Building on these principles, recent empirical work has shown how metacognitive reflection and learner-selected materials play a role in fostering greater awareness, autonomy, and motivation in pronunciation development (Luchini, 2024a; Luchini & Galante, 2024b). These studies exemplify how the shift from teacher-controlled assessment toward learner-centered design enables students to engage in self-monitoring and reflective practice, transforming assessment into an extension of learning itself.

The Persistent Gap: From Theory to Assessment Practice

Despite these advances, oral assessment practices continue to lag behind theoretical developments. Teacher-led interviews, scripted tasks, and standardized rubrics remain the norm in many institutional settings in Argentina, for example, often privileging control and reliability over authenticity and learner engagement (Fulcher, 2015). This misalignment creates a conceptual gap between what theory describes as communicative competence—interactive, multimodal, self-regulated—and how oral ability is still assessed in practice.

Emerging innovations, such as performance-based and multimodal tasks (Hafner et al., 2015; Stickler et al., 2020) or reflective pronunciation projects (Sardegna et al., 2017),

illustrate promising ways to integrate learning and assessment. However, as Byram (2020) and Fulcher (2015) point out, there is still a pressing need to develop and empirically evaluate integrative frameworks of oral assessment that foreground interaction, multimodality, and learner agency (Alshammari & Alruwaili, 2025).

This theoretical and pedagogical gap highlights the need for assessment models capable of capturing oral competence as a dynamic, multidimensional, and co-constructed process. Such models should reflect how learners interact with others and with their own performances, employ multimodal resources to create meaning, and regulate their learning through reflection and self-assessment. Addressing this need requires not only designing innovative tools but also analyzing how learners perceive, experience, and benefit from them—a central aim of the present study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: To what extent do the Multimodal Project Work (MMPW) and the Multimodal Assessment Task (MAT) contribute to the development of learners' oral performance?
RQ2: What dimensions of learning (e.g., metacognitive awareness, autonomy, multimodality, and phonological control) are most enhanced by each assessment instrument?
RQ3: How do learners' qualitative perceptions and reflections explain the patterns observed in the quantitative results?

METHODS

Design and Rationale

The research followed a mixed-methods design that combined quantitative and qualitative data to explore how two innovative oral assessment instruments foster learners' communicative, metacognitive, and affective development. The quantitative strand sought to identify measurable tendencies in learners' perceptions of core pedagogical dimensions—such as linguistic improvement, autonomy, collaboration, and multimodality—through descriptive and inferential analyses of Likert-scale data. The qualitative strand provided a complementary perspective by analyzing students' open-ended comments thematically, allowing for a more detailed interpretation of individual experiences. Integrating both strands enabled the triangulation of numerical and narrative evidence to determine the overall effectiveness and pedagogical value of learner-centered assessment practices.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted within an English Teacher Education Program at a public university in Argentina. Two advanced language courses provided the setting for data collection. One course focused on L2 oral discourse and pronunciation, while the other emphasized advanced communicative competence through integrated language skills. Both courses share a common pedagogical foundation: they promote interaction, reflection, and the integration of multimodal resources in academic communication.

A total of 31 pre-service English teachers participated voluntarily: 16 from the pronunciation course and 15 from the advanced communication course. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 38 (M = 24.6). All were native speakers of Rioplatense Spanish and had achieved proficiency levels between B2+ and C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent; all students were informed of the study's aims, and confidentiality was guaranteed.

The courses were taught by experienced English teacher-educators following an integrated curriculum that emphasizes communicative competence, learner autonomy, and reflective practice. In both contexts, the innovative oral assessments replaced traditional end-of-term interviews, providing authentic opportunities for collaboration, self-direction, and multimodal expression.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through two parallel post-assessment questionnaires, each designed to capture learners' perceptions of the specific oral assessment instrument implemented in their course. Both questionnaires combined Likert-scale and open-ended items, allowing for a mixed data corpus suitable for descriptive, inferential, and thematic analyses. Each instrument contained 20 items grouped around several dimensions:

- Linguistic and oral performance (e.g., pronunciation, fluency, intelligibility),
- Autonomy and metacognitive reflection,
- Collaboration and interaction,
- Motivation and engagement,
- Multimodality and creativity, and
- Intercultural or professional relevance.

Responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*), complemented by open-ended prompts inviting students to describe the most valuable aspects of the experience, perceived challenges, and potential improvements. Questionnaires were administered online immediately after the completion of each oral assessment, ensuring that students could reflect on their experiences holistically.
The instrument used in the pronunciation course was originally piloted and validated in a previous cohort, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of .79, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Both questionnaires were also cross-checked for content validity through item mapping against the study's research questions and theoretical constructs (Cohen et al., 2018).

Implementation of the Assessment Instruments

The implementation of both assessment designs followed carefully scaffolded sequences that combined theoretical preparation, task execution, and reflection. As shown in Table 1, each instrument was structured to promote learner autonomy and oral development through distinct yet complementary pathways.

Table 1

Implementation Stages and Pedagogical Aims of the Two Assessment Instruments

Stage	MAT (Pronunciation Course)	MMPW (Advanced Communication Course)
1. Theoretical Preparation	Students watch an instructional video introducing key pronunciation concepts (segmental and suprasegmental features) and take notes on relevant terminology.	Groups review theoretical blocks from the course and select a *core thematic unit* that connects at least two previously studied texts with one new source (e.g., film, advertisement, or song).
2. Topic and Material Selection	Each learner chooses a short (2–3 min) video featuring a native English speaker and selects a segment for analysis and imitation.	Teams decide on their project focus, collect multimodal materials, and plan how to integrate them around the chosen theme.
3. Analysis and Planning	Learners transcribe and analyze the chosen segment using Wells' 3Ts (2006) framework (tonality, tonicity, tone).	Groups design a storyboard and outline the logical sequence of the multimodal presentation, ensuring cohesion and visual coherence.
4. Practice and Production	Students rehearse the segment through *covert practice*, focusing on the accuracy and naturalness of rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns while maintaining segmental precision.	Teams collaboratively produce a multimodal artifact (video, podcast, or interactive digital presentation) using apps or tools that allow multimodal integration.
5. Presentation and Recording	Learners record themselves reading the selected segment aloud, applying their analysis to reproduce the speaker's delivery.	Groups present their project (max. 20 minutes), distributing speaking time evenly among members and ensuring clarity, coherence, and multimodal engagement.
6. Comparison and Reflection	Students compare their recording with the original, identify areas of improvement, and reflect on their pronunciation development.	Teams engage in peer and teacher feedback, reflecting on the effectiveness of their multimodal and oral performance.
7. Self-Assessment and Submission	Learners self-evaluate using the MAT rubric and complete an online reflection form as part of their final submission.	Students complete an individual post-test evaluation survey, integrating self-assessment into their final grade as part of the reflection component.
Pedagogical Focus	Awareness and control of suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation) while maintaining segmental accuracy,	Collaboration, creativity, interaction, integration of linguistic and multimodal competencies, and critical reflection.

	through reflection and self-regulation.

Note. Luchini's own work

These sequences ensured that both instruments guided learners from preparation to reflection, addressing complementary dimensions of oral performance: interaction and collaboration in the MMPW, and suprasegmental control, accuracy, and self-regulation in the MAT.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data from the Likert-scale items were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and range) were used to examine overall patterns of student perceptions within each pedagogical dimension. Inferential analyses were then performed to explore intra- and inter-instrument differences. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were employed to compare paired items addressing related constructs within each questionnaire. Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to explore associations among dimensions such as autonomy, reflection, and oral improvement. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (v.27), with an alpha level of $p < .05$ set for significance.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed through inductive thematic coding. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, responses were first read for initial impressions, then coded for semantic and latent meanings, and finally grouped into broader categories representing recurring themes. Coding reliability was ensured through recursive comparison across datasets. NVivo 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020) software facilitated the organization and frequency analysis of emerging themes such as multimodality and creativity, collaboration, autonomy, reflection, and intercultural awareness.

Triangulation

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results followed a convergent triangulation design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Patterns of convergence were identified when both datasets reinforced the same interpretation—for example, high Likert means for collaboration accompanied by frequent qualitative references to teamwork and shared decision-making. Divergences, on the other hand, were examined to uncover potential tensions (e.g., high ratings for collaboration but qualitative concerns about group fairness). This triangulated approach ensured a balanced, evidence-based interpretation of the data.

Ethical Considerations and Researcher Reflexivity

All research procedures complied with institutional ethics guidelines for studies involving human participants. Students provided informed consent, participation was voluntary, and

no identifying information was collected. The dual role of the teacher-researcher was acknowledged, and reflexivity was practiced throughout data collection and analysis to mitigate potential bias. Data interpretation prioritized participants' voices and aimed to represent their experiences accurately within the broader pedagogical inquiry.

RESULTS

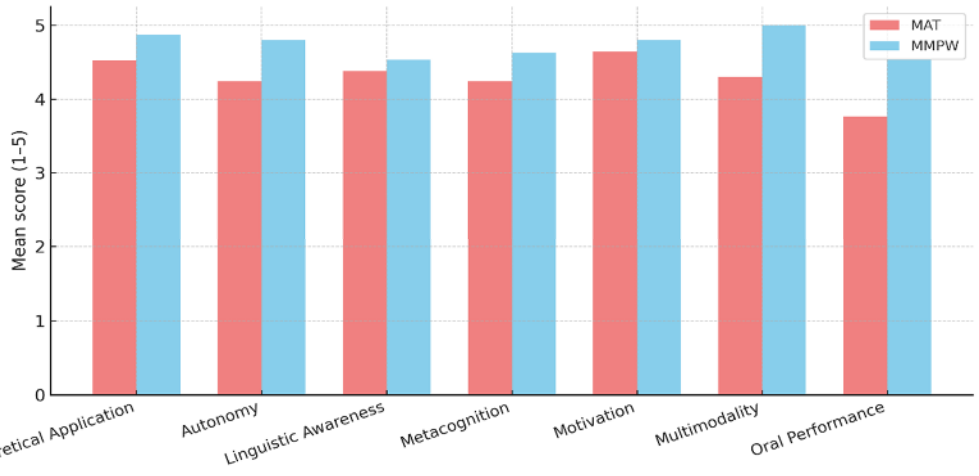
Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for both instruments across the seven dimensions identified. Overall mean scores indicate that both tools were perceived as effective for evaluating oral performance, though with distinct emphases. The MMPW yielded higher means in *multimodality*, *autonomy*, and *oral performance*, whereas the MAT obtained higher values in *motivation* and *linguistic awareness*. Standard deviations remained below 1.0 in all dimensions, suggesting consistency in students' responses.

Table 2
Mean scores per dimension in MMPW and MAT

Dimension	MMPW (M)	MAT (M)
Theoretical application	4.87	4.52
Autonomy	4.80	4.24
Linguistic awareness	4.53	4.38
Metacognition	4.63	4.24
Motivation	4.80	4.64
Multimodality	5.00	4.30
Oral performance	4.53	3.76

Figure 1 illustrates these trends. Both groups reported positive perceptions, yet MMPW scores were consistently higher across all dimensions—particularly in *multimodality*, *theoretical application*, *autonomy,* and *motivation*—suggesting that collaborative multimodal work enhanced learners' creativity, interaction, engagement and expressive fluency. In contrast, MAT results peaked in *motivation* and *theoretical application*, highlighting its focus on individual engagement and the integration of theoretical knowledge into practice.

Figure 1
Average scores per dimension: MMPW vs. MAT



To examine intra-instrument variation, Friedman tests were conducted separately for each assessment tool. Significant differences were observed among the dimensions for both MMPW ($\chi^2 = 14.71$, $p = .023$) and MAT ($\chi^2 = 34.30$, $p < .001$), confirming that students did not perceive all dimensions equally. Within the MMPW, *multimodality, theoretical application,* and *autonomy* obtained the highest ranks, whereas in the MAT, *motivation* and *theoretical application* were most prominent.

To explore interrelationships among key constructs, Spearman correlations were computed for *autonomy*, *metacognition*, and *oral performance*. The results are summarized in Table 3. In the MMPW, *autonomy* strongly correlated with *metacognition* ($\rho = .61$, $p = .016$), suggesting that self-directed engagement was associated with deeper reflection on learning processes. In the MAT, *metacognition* correlated significantly with *oral performance* ($\rho = .51$, $p = .010$) and *autonomy* ($\rho = .43$, $p = .030$), indicating that awareness and self-regulation supported learners' prosodic control and perceived oral gains.

Table 3

Spearman correlations among autonomy, metacognition, and oral performance

Instrument	Dimensions Compared	ρ	*p*
MMPW	Autonomy–Metacognition	.61	.016
MMPW	Autonomy–Oral performance	–.09	.747
MMPW	Metacognition–Oral performance	.16	.560
MAT	Autonomy–Metacognition	.33	.108
MAT	Autonomy–Oral performance	.43	.030
MAT	Metacognition–Oral performance	.51	.010

Figures 2 and 3 visually represent these correlations. Figure 2 displays the interrelationships among *autonomy*, *metacognition*, and *orality* in the MMPW condition. Correlation matrices represent the strength and direction of associations between variables, with coefficients (ρ) ranging from –1 to +1. Darker colors indicate stronger

relationships. Positive coefficients suggest that higher levels in one construct are associated with higher levels in another. As shown, *autonomy* and *metacognition* are strongly and positively correlated, whereas links with *orality* are weaker and non-significant.

Figure 2

Spearman Correlation Matrix for MMPW Dimensions (Autonomy, Metacognition, Orality)

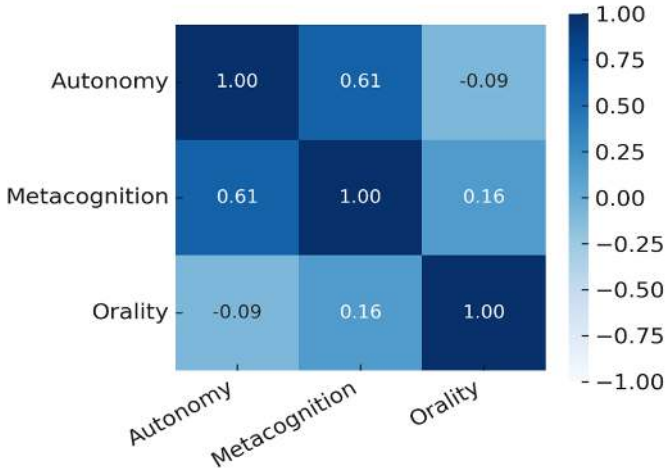
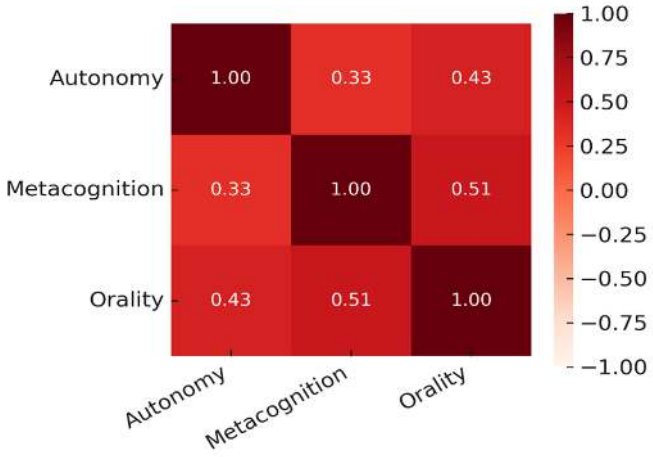


Figure 3 illustrates the same interrelationships within the MAT context. As in the previous figure, positive coefficients indicate concurrent increases in both variables. The results show moderate and significant positive correlations between *metacognition* and *orality*, as well as between *autonomy* and *orality*. This pattern suggests that, under the MAT approach, greater metacognitive awareness and self-regulation are associated with perceived oral performance gains.

Figure 3

Spearman Correlation Matrix for MAT Dimensions (Autonomy, Metacognition, Orality)



These patterns confirm that the two assessment instruments activate complementary yet interconnected dimensions of oral competence: *communicative fluency* and *multimodal integration* in the MMPW, and *prosodic awareness* and *reflective control* in the MAT.

Qualitative Results

To complement the statistical analysis, a thematic content analysis was conducted on students' open-ended responses from both instruments. The goal was to identify the underlying perceptions, learning processes, and challenges that explain how each task supported oral development. Responses were read inductively and coded into recurring semantic categories, which were later grouped under broader themes aligned with the quantitative dimensions (e.g., *metacognition*, *autonomy*, *multimodality*, *oral performance*). This analysis aimed to triangulate quantitative trends with learners' qualitative perspectives to better understand the pedagogical effectiveness of both tools. Table 4 summarizes the main themes, their frequency across responses, and representative excerpts from participants.

Table 4

Emergent themes, descriptions, and representative student comments

Instrument	Theme	Description	Frequency	Representative Student Quote
MMPW	**Integration and multimodality**	Students highlighted how combining media (texts, images, videos) facilitated meaning-making and creativity.	16	*"It was interesting to see how different media could work together to express an idea more clearly."*
MMPW	**Oral confidence and collaboration**	Group work and rehearsal improved fluency and confidence in oral delivery.	14	*"Presenting with my group helped me speak more naturally and be confident when explaining ideas."*
MMPW	**Reflection and transfer**	Students reported increased awareness of how tasks connect to real-world and academic contexts.	10	*"It reminded me of other presentations we've done, but this time we really thought about what we wanted to say and how to say it."*
MAT	**Prosodic awareness**	Participants emphasized noticing and controlling rhythm and intonation when imitating native models.	22	*"I became more aware of how rhythm and tone change meaning, and now I try to pay attention to that when I speak."*

MAT	**Application of theory**	The activity helped students apply Wells' 3Ts (2006) and other theoretical concepts to real speech.	15	*"When I marked tonality and tonicity, I finally understood what we learned in class."*
MAT	**Pronunciation practice and self-monitoring**	Learners valued the opportunity to compare their recordings with the native model and reflect on progress.	17	*"Listening to my own recording and the original made me notice mistakes I never realized before."*
MAT	**Motivation and autonomy**	The option to choose a video and work independently fostered engagement and ownership.	12	*"Choosing the video myself made the task more personal and motivating."*

Note. Luchini's own work

Students' reflections reveal complementary learning pathways activated by the two instruments. In the MMPW, learners viewed the task as a *collaborative and creative experience* that encouraged them to integrate multiple modes of expression and take responsibility for meaning-making. The emphasis on teamwork and public presentation fostered *confidence and fluency*, supporting the high quantitative scores for *oral performance* and *autonomy*. Reflection on task transfer to other academic contexts also indicated the development of *metacognitive awareness* beyond the classroom. In contrast, the MAT promoted a more *individualized and analytical engagement* with oral language. Students consistently noted enhanced *awareness of prosody* (stress, rhythm and intonation) and appreciated applying theory to practice through Wells' (2006) "3Ts" framework. The recursive nature of transcription, imitation, and self-evaluation refined *self-monitoring* and *metacognitive control*, aligning with the significant correlations found between *metacognition*, *autonomy*, and *oral performance*.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined how two innovative assessment instruments fostered oral and interactive development in English language learning. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, this section interprets the findings in light of the three RQs, emphasizing how the instruments supported different yet complementary dimensions of oral competence: *interaction, multimodality, autonomy, metacognition, linguistic awareness, motivation,* and *theoretical application.*

RQ1. Effectiveness of the instruments in promoting oral and interactive competence

The data indicate that both assessment tools effectively enhanced learners' oral and interactional performance, though they did so through distinct pedagogical mechanisms. The MMPW promoted *communicative fluency, multimodal coordination,* and *interactional confidence* by requiring students to design and deliver collaborative presentations in which meaning was jointly constructed across semiotic modes. These processes align with Swain's (2006) concept of *collaborative dialogue*, in which interaction serves both as a medium for co-constructing meaning and as a cognitive space for internalizing linguistic forms. The interactive exchanges and rehearsal phases described by students also support Byram's (2020) view that oral communication competence is inseparable from social participation and intercultural understanding. Meanwhile, the MAT supported *accuracy, prosodic awareness,* and *reflective self-regulation*, engaging learners in an intrapersonal form of interaction between their own speech and that of the native model. This type of self-dialogue aligns with Sardegna et al. (2017) and Kennedy and Trofimovich (2010), who argue that metaprosodic awareness emerges from repetitive cycles of listening, (covert) imitation (Sardegna, 2022), and reflection. Thus, while the MMPW expanded interaction *outwardly* through collaboration, the MAT deepened interaction *inwardly* through conscious self-analysis (Aydan & Capa-Aydin, 2025), together reflecting a dual pathway to effective oral development.

RQ2. Dimensions of learning most enhanced by each instrument

Distinct patterns emerged across dimensions. In the MMPW, *multimodality*, *autonomy*, and *motivation* achieved the highest levels of perceived impact. Students' reflections show that combining textual, visual, and oral resources enhanced creativity and engagement, confirming Jewitt's (2016) and Kress's (2010) frameworks on *multimodal literacy* as a dynamic, socially situated form of interaction. Moreover, the ability to make design decisions collectively fostered *autonomy* and *shared responsibility*, echoing Little's (1991) notion that autonomy thrives within socially mediated tasks. In contrast, the MAT heightened *metacognitive awareness*, *linguistic accuracy,* and *theoretical application.* Learners emphasized noticing stress, rhythm and tone-orientation, linking them explicitly to Wells' (2006) *3Ts* framework. This finding is consistent with Sardegna et al. (2017), who claim that guided self-monitoring fosters awareness of phonological detail and sustained improvement. The MAT thus cultivated the analytic and reflective dimensions of oral competence, those that underpin control, intelligibility, and long-term learning.

RQ3. Relationship between learners' perceptions and quantitative trends

Learners' perceptions consistently reinforced and expanded on the quantitative findings. High motivation and engagement across both instruments highlight the importance of *interactional* and *affective involvement* in learning-oriented assessment contexts (Dörnyei, 1994). In the MMPW, students' sense of achievement stemmed from *interactional collaboration*—negotiating meaning, synchronizing discourse rhythm, and adapting to peers' communicative styles. This confirms Breen and Candlin's (1980) claim that interactive tasks generate opportunities for authentic L2 use and co-regulated learning. In the MAT, however, interaction was more introspective, characterized by the *dialogue between awareness and performance.* Learners described monitoring their

progress by comparing their speech to the model—an internalized, reflective form of interaction consistent with Goh and Vandergrift's (2012) model of metacognitive listening and speaking. Across both instruments, students demonstrated growing capacity to integrate *awareness, self-direction, and multimodal sensitivity,* the hallmarks of advanced interactive oral competence.

These findings reveal that oral competence in L2 contexts cannot be reduced to fluency or accuracy alone. Instead, it emerges from a network of interacting dimensions—metacognitive, affective, cognitive, linguistic, and social. The MMPW strengthens *communicative interaction, multimodal integration,* and *autonomous collaboration*, while the MAT consolidates *prosodic control, metacognitive reflection,* and *theoretical grounding.* In unison, they embody a multidimensional, interaction-based approach to oral assessment, aligning with recent calls for pedagogies that balance creativity, analytical precision, and learner agency (Alshammari & Alruwaili, 2025; Byram, 2020; Kress, 2010; Sardegna et al., 2017). This synergy between multimodal expressiveness and reflective control suggests that innovative oral assessment should not privilege one dimension over another, but rather activate the full ecology of interaction—between learners, between modes, and within the learner's own cognitive and affective processes.

LIMITATIONS, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While the study offers valuable insights into learner-centered oral assessment, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was modest and context-specific, involving pre-service teachers from a single institution; thus, generalization to other educational settings should be approached cautiously. Second, the reliance on self-reported perceptions may introduce subjective bias, as students' evaluations might reflect affective engagement rather than measurable learning outcomes. Finally, although quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated, the study did not include objective performance measures (e.g., pre-/post-speaking scores or acoustic analysis) that could substantiate perceived gains. These limitations, however, open avenues for methodological refinement in future replications.

Despite these constraints, the findings carry important implications for L2 teaching and assessment. First, they highlight the potential of multimodal and interaction-based assessment to capture a broader spectrum of oral competence—linking linguistic accuracy with creativity, reflection, and collaboration. Second, the emphasis on autonomy and self-regulation shows that assessment may function not only as a tool for measuring outcomes but also as a driver of learning, encouraging students to monitor and assess their own progress. Third, the integration of reflective and collaborative tasks suggests that teacher roles can evolve from evaluators to facilitators of interaction and self-awareness, fostering more authentic and learner-empowering assessment environments. In practical terms, L2 programs might incorporate project-based, multimodal evaluations as complements to traditional oral exams, using digital tools that promote feedback, peer collaboration, and metacognitive reflection. This pedagogical reorientation aligns assessment with contemporary understandings of communicative competence as socially and cognitively co-constructed.

Future research should extend this line of inquiry in several directions. Longitudinal and cross-institutional studies could examine whether the observed benefits of multimodal and reflective assessment persist over time and across diverse educational contexts. Experimental designs incorporating objective performance metrics—such as intelligibility ratings, fluency measures, or discourse-analytic indices—could provide stronger empirical validation of learning outcomes. Additionally, investigating teachers' perceptions and classroom practices would help bridge the gap between theory and implementation, ensuring the sustainable integration of learner-centered assessment within institutional curricula. Finally, future work could explore how these assessment practices intersect with AI-assisted feedback tools and digital multimodality, examining their potential to scaffold interaction, self-correction, and learner agency in evolving educational ecologies.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how innovative, learner-centered approaches to oral assessment can promote more authentic and reflective forms of communication in L2 learning. By comparing two multimodal assessment designs through a mixed-methods perspective, this research work showed that assessment may function not only as a measure of achievement but also as a process of learning and transformation. Students' perceptions revealed that while collaborative and interactive tasks encouraged greater fluency, creativity, and engagement, reflective and self-regulatory activities fostered awareness and control over oral performance. These complementary dimensions emphasize the pedagogical value of integrating multimodality, autonomy, and metacognitive reflection into assessment. These findings aim to contribute to ongoing discussions on rethinking oral assessment within communicative and constructivist paradigms and offer empirical evidence that learner-centered approaches can strengthen both the social and cognitive dimensions of oral development. Ultimately, reimagining oral assessment as a multimodal and reflective endeavor invites teachers and researchers to view this process not as a final judgment, but as a continuum of learning that accommodates interaction, introspection, and sustained growth. These insights reaffirm that fostering reflection and interaction through diverse assessment pathways is central to building meaningful, transformative language learning experiences in L2 education.

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