

Chapter 6

Designing Goal–Oriented Online Speaking Activities for EFL Learners in a Post–Pandemic World: Insights From CEFR Companion Volume

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect every aspect of life. English language education has been shifted from face-to-face education to online education as a result of sudden decisions. English language teachers and learners are expected to adapt to this sudden change and manage the process effectively, without considering their technological competence and knowledge about technology's integration into foreign language pedagogy. In the process of teaching English as a foreign language, speaking skills teaching, which is often neglected compared to other skills, has become more limited in online education due to various reasons. There is not enough study in the existing literature on the design of digital speaking activities. Therefore, the current book section deals with the design of goal-oriented digital speaking skills activities within the framework of the CEFR CV. Additionally, examples of goal-oriented digital speaking activities are presented in the present book chapter. The chapter will guide language teachers to design digital speaking activities appropriate to CEFR CV.

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INTRODUCTION

The current chapter addresses goal-oriented online speaking activities designed for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in online interactions after experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic effects in foreign/second language education contexts globally. First, after giving brief information about the current situation regarding the pandemic, this chapter focuses on distance online language education during the pandemic. Next, it informs the readers about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR-CV), and online transactions and collaboration. Then, it discusses the features of EFL speaking skills in digital environments and presents goal-oriented speaking activity samples. Last, it concludes with some insights into foreign/second language education contexts.

Covid-19, short for “coronavirus disease 2019”, emerged in and spread from Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China, on December 31, 2019, and became a severe pandemic in a short time all across the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020a, 2020b). The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all walks of life severely. As of October 16, 2021, there are 4,879,235 confirmed deaths due to the global pandemic reported by the dashboard of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021). As a generation born in the latest quarter of the 20th century, we witnessed many things on our television screens and our physical environments due to the unprecedented scale of change in technology, wars, refugee crises around the world, and explorations on Mars. Humanity has experienced the Covid-19 pandemic recently, and it has brought restrictions to all parts of life by limiting people from reaching their everyday routines concurrently across the globe.

Education is one of the most affected domains by the pandemic. Most educational institutions from all levels were forced to close their doors to students to avoid transmission. Teachers and students had neither heard of nor experienced a kind of online education previously. However, the pandemic led to the shifts of face-to-face education contexts to either synchronous or asynchronous education contexts after overnight news throughout the world. As a result, all educational professionals started to conduct our lessons through the Internet and experienced, maybe for the first time during our teaching and learning lives, the total immersion in remote education during the pandemic. In this context, things may become complicated due to learners’ different levels and competencies in foreign/second language education contexts. Teaching in online education contexts may become a problem, especially for those who are so-called digital immigrants. Prensky defines digital immigrants as *“Those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are ... Digital Immigrants.”* (2001, p. 1-2). Most of the teachers,

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