



The Existence of CEFR Interaction Competence of Communicative Language Activities in TikTok

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of social media apps has the potential to provide teachers and students with a platform for innovative and engaging language learning, one of which is TikTok. However, there is a lack of investigation and explanation on to what extent and how videos available on TikTok can enhance interaction and activities in language learning classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to examine the existence of CEFR interaction competence in communicative activities and its level on selected TikTok videos. This study applied a content analysis method with a qualitative approach using the CEFR reference of the illustrative descriptor scale. The top 250 learning videos from the search results for the hashtag #learnenglish were collected. The findings show that most activities were found in overall oral interaction with a score of 291 and the level was A2 with 46% of occurrences. The findings demonstrate that TikTok learning videos are well-suited as teaching materials for classes at the A2 proficiency level with general oral interaction activities.

INTRODUCTION

Language development in contemporary times is marked by dynamic changes and advancements, driven by evolving technologies, pedagogical methods, and societal needs. In the process of modernizing language development, there is an internationally recognized system called the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). CEFR, which groups language competence into three categories (C1 and C2 for proficient users, B1 and B2 for independent users, and A1 and A2 for basic users), presents the description of language use by adopting the action-oriented approach, breaking down language competence into three constituents: communicative activities, communication strategies and communicative language competencies (Hazar, 2021). This framework has shown to be successful because it comprises educational ideals, a clear model of competencies connected to language, and practical tools in the form of illustrated descriptors to



support curriculum building, assessment, and teaching and learning materials (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). CEFR has been commonly used as the framework for second/foreign language learning, not only in European countries but also in Asian countries such as Japan, Thailand, and many more, with some local adjustments. In the Indonesian context, a study by Maryo (2021) also found similar results in which implementation of CEFR in Indonesia required an adjustment to local needs and culture.

As technology is advancing, impacting the learning inputs and activities in learning English, studies on the relevancy between applications or platforms and CEFR in providing the models of standard language mastery have been conducted. Huttayavilaiphan (2022) revealed that their local participant students perceived the CEFR-based online intercultural communication activities with the international participant volunteers positively. It boosts their confidence and communicative language competence, encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic abilities that correspond to the CEFR (2001) scales. Some other studies highlight the potential of using social media-based language learning to promote CEFR-based standardized language learning outcomes. Kharis et al. (2020) explore the use of Padlet for participants at levels A2-B1, showing that social media has the potential to be a tool to support language learning to meet the standards or certain levels on the CEFR standard. Some other studies showed that Instagram can help improve English vocabulary mastery at level B1 (Setyowati, Setiawati, & Khurniawati, 2022) and can boost awareness of grammar knowledge and use (Sarangapani & Hashim, 2022). This is most likely because social media has been today's generation's daily needs, making it more relevant to the students' real-life use.

YouTube has also gained more fame as the learning source commonly used in the classroom, especially during and post-pandemic era, for example a study by Shopia, Sabila, & Purnawati (2022), yet, it is difficult to find well-suited short videos for class use. Thus, teachers started using TikTok videos which are generally more compact. Several studies have explored the role of TikTok as a learning medium for language learning. Ferstephanie and Pratiwi (2021) investigate the use of TikTok as a new way of learning to speak in a new target language, revealing that this new experience can increase student's motivation. In addition, Nabilah (2021) explores the benefits of TikTok in learning to write a descriptive text, the findings of which show that the students experience an increase in a significant level. This means that learning a language through TikTok videos has a positive impact on student's motivation so that students pay more attention and get more involved in their learning process. Furthermore, Sinta & Zulfitri (2022) examine whether learning through TikTok can affect vocabulary improvement in students. The findings show that students get the process of learning English vocabulary at ease, and thus, helps them to memorize vocabulary in adjectives better. However, no investigation has been conducted on whether TikTok videos integrate any CEFR-based standardized language to help ascertain that they have the potential for language learning. Despite the fact that the pandemic raises the use of social media in language learning, studies are needed to verify if social media-based learning materials can meet the standard.

Referring to the studies above, this study aimed to investigate to what extent the selected TikTok videos incorporate CEFR levels. The findings of this research will provide an overview of the various types of interaction competencies that may be found in TikTok videos and their CEFR level so that teachers can use them for teaching materials according to the specified level.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research approach used in this research is qualitative as it is the most suitable approach for observing the content on the TikTok videos. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the qualitative method is a research procedure that collects its own data through the examination of documents, books, and social media texts. The method used in this research is content analysis since it enables the identification of the patterns and trends presented in the data. Content analysis helps inform conclusions about policies, views, and intentions from various sources, as well as impacting positive results on audiences without directly contacting these sources (Mayring, 2015).

In order to address the research inquiry effectively, the top 250 TikTok videos on English language learning content with hashtags #learnenglish were selected as the data source. To conduct data analysis, the researcher utilized ATLAS.ti and a table to record the data source identification and analysis. The types and levels are categorized into those shown below using ATLAS.ti; 1). Researcher input 250 TikTok videos into new documents 2). Make coding that contains three interaction competencies along with their descriptors and also the levels 3). Identify the videos using an illustrative CEFR descriptor scale reference 4). Calculating the appearance of the type and level of interaction competence in the TikTok learning video.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the researchers classified the learning videos according to the activities of CEFR interaction competence of communicative language activities contained in the TikTok learning video and the Level of CEFR interaction competence of communicative language activities contained in the TikTok learning video as presented below.

A. Overall CEFR Interaction Competence

Based on Figure 1 presented below, there are nine discernible types of interactions observed within TikTok learning videos, each exhibiting varying levels of prominence. The most notable interaction type is "Overall oral interaction," which attains the highest value, reaching 291. Overall oral interaction generally covers all categories of interaction at CEFR, the video includes all categories of activities provided for interaction at CEFR such as understanding an interlocutor, conversation, informal discussion, goal-oriented cooperation, obtaining goods and services, information exchange, interviewing and being interviewed, and using telecommunications. The example related to the overall oral interaction was the video contains a woman in a place with her friend and offers a piece of food by saying "Do you want another bite?" and his friend answers "I ate a lot" which shows that there is a conversation in the learning video with the Overall oral interaction category.

The second highest value is Understanding an interlocutor with a value of 211, Understanding an interlocutor due to concerns about understanding a person with whom you are conversing directly in an interaction with the possibility of negotiating meaning (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to Understanding an interlocutor was the video contains a man



asking about the facilities at the hotel and a good place near the hotel by asking "Is there anything interesting to see nearby?" and being answered by the hotel maid "Yes, the hotel is in the area called the rock". The learning video refers to understanding the interlocutor because there is a listening or understanding process by the interlocutor.

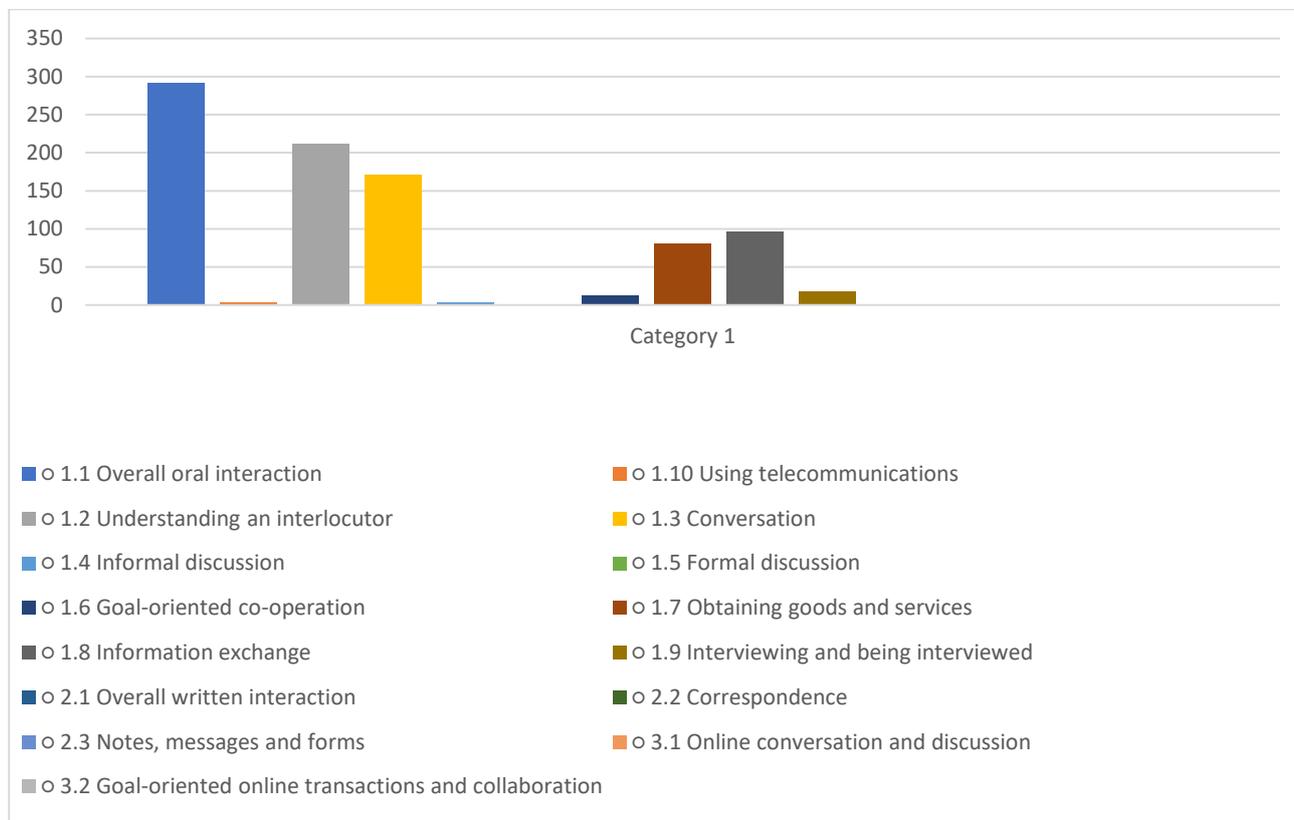


Figure 1. Analysis Results on the Types of CEFR-based Interactions in the TikTok Learning Videos

The third highest value is Conversation with a value of 171, Conversation concerns interaction with a primarily social function: the establishment and maintenance of personal relationships (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to the Conversation was the video containing role-play exercises or duet challenges between the creator and viewers about personal past issues. the creator asks viewers "Have you ever had something stolen from you?" and after that viewers can answer with the provided sentences such as "I had my wallet stolen when I was in Paris last year.". The learning video shows that there is a Conversation interaction between creators and viewers.

Then the fourth highest value is Information exchange with a value of 97, Information exchange due to concerns about social exchange activities (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to the Information exchange was the video containing a man who wants to register a visa by saying "I want to get registered in Spain" Then a waiter answers "What is your current address?" The learning video refers to the interaction activities of Information exchange by showing an exchange of information provided by the man to the visa officer.



The last highest value is Obtaining goods and services with a score of 80, Obtaining goods and services mainly concerns service encounters in restaurants, shops, banks, etc. Effectively making a complaint appears at B1, and above this level, the scale focuses on following up on a complaint or problem and negotiating a solution (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to Obtaining goods and services was the video containing a woman ordering a drink by saying "I'll have caramel macchiato, please." followed by a waiter "Sure, what size would you like?". The learning video refers to the interaction activities of Obtaining goods and services by showing interactions between customers and waiters in a coffee shop.

The lowest score is a value of 50 obtained by three communication interactions. First, Interviewing and being interviewed concerns the specialist roles associated with doctor's appointments and job applications as well as other forms of examination, plus surveys and, in an educational context, projects. In relation to signing, there is an assumption that the interlocutor can also sign (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to the Interviewing and being interviewed was the video contains a woman who wants to take medicine and tells her illness to the health service by saying "I have a bad cold, do you have something I can take?" followed by the health service "Does your back hurt?". The learning video refers to the interviewing and being interviewed interaction activities by showing an Interviewing and being interviewed activity by the health service with this woman.

The second is Goal-oriented cooperation, Goal-oriented cooperation concerns collaborative, task-focused work, which is a daily occurrence in real life, especially in professional contexts. As with the conversation and discussion scales, this scale includes similar descriptors on the ability to follow discussion (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to Goal-oriented cooperation was the video containing a mother asking her daughter to do something for her by saying "Can you go to the supermarket and pick up some vegetables for me?" and the child replies "Got it, Mom, I'll be back soon". The learning video refers to Goal-oriented co-operation interaction due to cooperative activities while cooking.

The third is Informal discussion, Informal discussion includes aspects of both the interpersonal and evaluative use of language since these tend to be interwoven in everyday interaction (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to the Informal discussion was the video contains role-play exercises or duet challenges between the creator and the audience about movie night time. The creator asks the viewer about the excitement and the viewer says with the provided sentence such as "Yes, I'm very excited" After that the creator answers "I was thinking either an action or an animated movie". The learning video shows an Informal discussion about which film to watch for movie night

The last is Using telecommunication, Using telecommunications concerns the use of the phone and internet-based apps for remote communication (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). The example related to Using telecommunication was the video contains a woman who is talking to her friend by telephone "Sorry I can hear you very well". The learning video refers to the interaction activities Using telecommunication by showing that these activities are carried out via telephone.

The other six types of interaction are Formal discussion, Overall written interaction, Correspondence, Notes, messages and forms, Online conversations and discussions, and Goal-

oriented online transactions and collaboration did not find any activities of interaction contained in the TikTok learning video. Furthermore, the pie Figure below illustrates the overall Level of CEFR interaction competence of communicative language activities contained in the TikTok learning video.

The findings show that the top three Overall CEFR Interaction Competence exposed on the TikTok learning videos sourced in this study belong to the Overall Oral Interaction activities, with 291 occurrences, Understanding an Interlocutor with 211 occurrences, and Conversation with Role-play or Duet challenge content with 171 occurrences. It can be concluded that the purpose of creating content is to improve viewers' communication skills because viewers not only watch videos but can also interact with creators. This finding supports Herwanto's (2022) fact that some students say they enjoy the convenience and opportunity to practice speaking on TikTok frequently in the use of Role-play activities. The use of TikTok to improve speaking skills not only helps students to improve speaking skills, but also becomes more interactive (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022) Other findings are in line with Rahmawati (2023) that the use of TikTok not only improves their ability but also their creativity, motivation, and vocabulary.

B. Overall CEFR Interaction Level

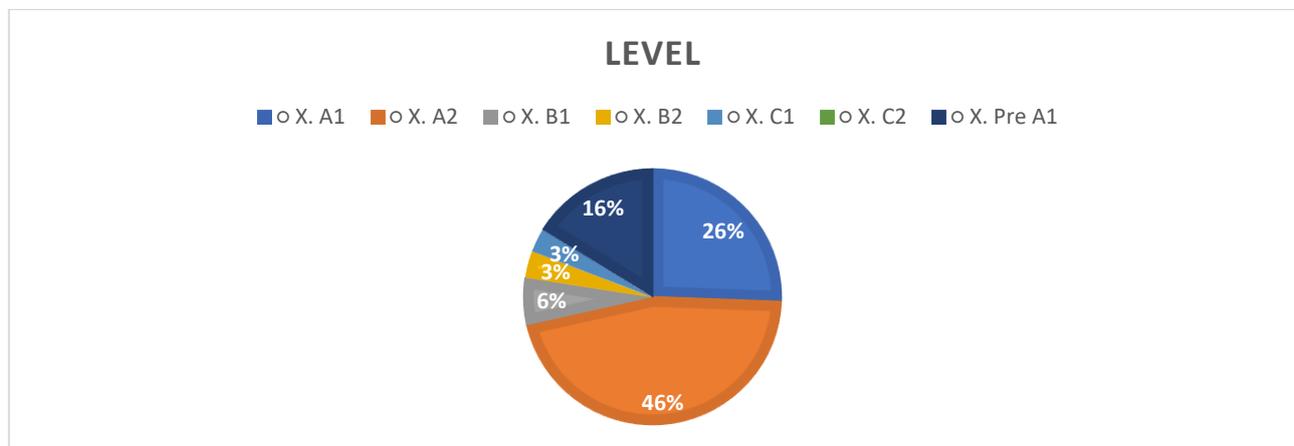


Figure 2. Analysis Results on the Levels of CEFR-based Interactions in the TikTok Learning Videos

Based on the Figure presented above, there are six discernible Levels of interactions observed within TikTok learning videos, each exhibiting varying levels of prominence. The most notable interaction Level is "A2 Level" which attains the highest value, reaching 46%. The example was related to the video contains a woman asking others about the item she is looking for with A2 Level referring to the Information exchange descriptor "Can ask about things in shops." according to the sentence uttered by the woman who asked "Where can I find alcohol to clean my hands?" and was answered with "Oh, you mean hand sanitizer"

The second highest level is obtained at A1 Level with 26%, The example was related to the video contains Role-play exercises or Duet challenges between the creator and the viewers about self-introduction with A1 Level referring to the Conversation descriptor "Can take part in a simple conversation of a basic factual nature on a predictable topic (e.g. their home country, etc)." according to the sentence said by the viewers "Where are you from?" and answered with creator "I'm from Ireland, how about you?"



The third highest level is Pre-A1 Level with 16% occurrences, The example was related to the video contains Role-play exercises or Duet challenges between the creator and the viewers about self-introduction with Pre-A1 Level referring to the Understanding an interlocutor descriptor "Can understand simple questions that directly concern them (eg name, age, and address), if the person asks slowly and clearly." according to the sentence said by the creator "What is your name?" and answered with viewers "My name is...and you?"

The next highest level is B1 Level with 6% occurrences, The example was related to the video contains a woman in the airport with B1 Level referring to the Obtaining goods and services descriptor "Can deal with most transactions likely to arise while traveling, arranging travel or accommodation, or dealing with authorities during a foreign visit." in accordance with the sentence spoken by the airport officer "What's the purpose of your visit?" and was answered by the woman who had needs at the airport "I'm here for a vacation"

The lowest percentage is at levels B2 Level and C1 Level with an equivalent percentage of 3%. The example related to the B2 Level was a video containing the exchange of information between two people with B2 Level, referring to the Conversation descriptor "Can engage in an extended conversation on most general topics.". A woman asked "How often do you learn a language in a week" and was answered, "Every day, it only takes me three hours daily". Meanwhile, the example related to the C1 Level video contains a woman who was interviewed with C1 Level referring to the Interviewing and being interviewed descriptor "Can participate fully in an interview, as either interviewer or interviewee, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support, and handling interjections well". An HRD staff asked "What would you say is your greatest strength" and the interviewer answered, "I would say my greatest strength is a combination of enthusiasm and persistence".

Furthermore, the analysis of TikTok learning videos reveals a lack of content aligned with the highest proficiency level, C2, according to the CEFR. This suggests that the platform primarily caters to language learners seeking a more accessible and simplified learning experience. The platform's focus on simplicity aligns with users' preferences and learning styles, offering bite-sized and digestible lessons. This highlights TikTok's unique niche in catering to beginners and intermediate learners, offering engaging, user-friendly content that resonates with the broader audience.

The results showed that the interaction level that appeared the most was the A2 Level of all CEFR activities. The findings show that in one video there may be several levels. To be able to find out which level category belongs to, refer to the CEFR Illustrative Descriptors in the Companion Volume book. Furthermore, the findings show that learning English through the learning video of TikTok apps is very suitable for someone who is studying at A2 Level to improve language communication skills and learning videos can be used to teach English communication for level A2. This finding supports Johnson's (2015) benefits of using Twitter apps in language learning at the B1 level. The findings of Johnson (2015) reveal that learning via Twitter is interesting and motivating. It makes language learning situations fun and students are excited to read and reply to other people's tweets. It can be concluded that the learning method using apps has the potential to be liked by learners.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Many TikTok accounts post information/knowledge for language learners in the form of various interaction activities. However, not all of these learning videos include the focus of the interaction activities and their level. While these accounts do not post specific activities related to CEFR levels, they do support learners to improve their language skills and can be utilized for language classes of various Levels. The finding shows that TikTok learning videos are well-suited as teaching materials for educators conducting classes at the A2 proficiency level and conversations that include overall oral interaction activities. However, some videos also provide learning videos from various levels so that anyone can learn through these videos according to their level needs.

The CEFR contains several forms of communicative language activities; this study investigates one of them, namely interaction with the levels. This study looks into a small number of TikTok learning videos. To examine CEFR communicative language activities other than interactions, large-scale research using an increasing number of videos is required. Further research is suggested to determine whether the TikTok learning videos include communicative language activities in addition to interaction activities and what levels are included in the video.

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