

The Communicative Language Strategies of CEFR in TikTok Video

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Abstract

As a widely established scale a standardized assessment of language competency in Europe as well as worldwide, CEFR provides a clear baseline for assessing language ability. However, its representation in videos on TikTok, as one of the most potential language learning platforms remained unexplored. This study seeks to examine communicative language strategies linked with the CEFR in TikTok videos. Using a qualitative method and ATLAS.ti software, the data were collected from 200 videos using the hashtags #learnenglish and #communicationstrategies. Production was recognized as the most common communication strategy, with planning appearing in 43 videos. Moreover, videos in the B1 level were the most frequent, appearing in 86 videos. The results suggest that a systematic strategy, as seen in TikTok videos, requires a well-designed learning plan that includes regular intervals for listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice. Future studies should encourage educators to adopt these practices, to promote successful language education.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective cross-cultural and spoken language interaction is crucial and required in the modern world, which is becoming more integrated and multicultural (Aririguzoh, 2022). To address the challenges of cross-language communication and language barriers, a common language reference becomes essential (Amor et al., 2023). The European Common Reference Framework for Languages (CEFR or CEFRL), which was developed by the European Union and published in 2001, serves as an innovative linguistic tool for this purpose (Schneider, 2020; North & Piccardo, 2020). CEFR provides a standardized framework for assessing and defining language levels since the curriculum creation, instruction, and learning orientation are illustrated in the descriptions of the six levels of CEFR: C1 and C2 for proficient users, B1 and B2 for independent users, and A1 and A2 for basic users (Council of Europe, 2020). This framework offers an accepted frame of reference for language learners, teachers, employers, and institutions to comprehend and systematically assess language



skills. Additionally, CEFR puts some emphasis on developing a positive attitude while defining educational goals and successes throughout all educational levels (Foley, 2019; Phoolaikao & Sukying, 2021). This standardized approach not only supports language learners in tracking their progress but also facilitates the recognition of language qualifications across different countries, promoting mobility and mutual understanding in an increasingly interconnected world.

CEFR outlines different levels of language strategies that learners use as they progress. At the A1 (Beginner) level, learners depend on basic decoding strategies to grasp simple spoken or written texts. Moving to A2 (Elementary), they can construct short, basic sentences and handle routine communication, with an expanding vocabulary and use of simple language structures. At B1 (Lower-Intermediate), learners apply more advanced comprehension strategies such as predicting, summarizing, and making inferences, allowing them to grasp the main points of more complex texts. At the B2 (Upper-Intermediate) level, they communicate fluently on a broad range of topics, using nuanced language and creating more elaborate written arguments. At C1 (Advanced), learners comprehend a wide range of complex texts, including abstract concepts, and employ sophisticated strategies for detailed understanding. Finally, at C2 (Proficient), they communicate effortlessly in any situation, utilizing language with flexibility and effectiveness, and their writing exhibits a high level of proficiency, demonstrating mastery of complex structures and styles. By guiding students through progressively complicated phases of language acquisition, they gradually add to their prior knowledge, honing their abilities and broadening their capacity for successful communication in a variety of settings.

CEFR plays a vital role in encouraging communicative language strategies since it enables effective communication across different linguistic contexts. They encompass a range of large skills systematically, including interaction, mediation, and production, all of which are essential for achieving linguistic competence in real-world scenarios or communicative needs (Council of Europe, 2020). Therefore, CEFR offers a way to evaluate and measure language ability in real-world communication settings. To assist students, teachers, and language experts in navigating the complexities of communicative language activities and strategies, the framework provides a set of rules and descriptions required for effective interaction, mediation, production, and reception in a range of language situations by highlighting the significance of effective language usage. Hazar (2021) further explains that CEFR adopts an action-oriented approach to describe language use, breaking language competence down into three constituents: communicative activities, communication strategies, and communicative language competencies. These strategies are not only critical for language learning but also for adopting language use to diverse cultural contexts, making them versatile tools in multilanguage communication.

As CEFR encourages communicative language strategies, it is essential to enhance collaboration and improve the quality of language education globally. Nishimura-Sahi, (2022) and Afip et al. (2019) both emphasize how crucial the CEFR is for fostering international cooperation among educational institutions. According to both studies, the CEFR was deliberately appropriated as a workable way to accomplish long-term political and educational goals, with the assistance of a range of people, including academics. This highlights the importance of collaborative efforts and shared goals in the successful adoption of the framework across different contexts. Additionally, Díez-Bedmar & Byram, (2019a) examine how a group of Spanish instructors feel about the CEFR



to assess the impact of the framework on educators. Their results showed that there were differences in the instructors' knowledge of the CEFR, perspectives on its impact, and comprehension of its specifics. This demonstrates how instructors must get additional training and assistance to successfully apply the CEFR in the classroom. Both studies indicate that the CEFR's success relies heavily on the collaboration and commitment of various stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and researchers, who work together to implement the framework effectively. Furthermore, these collaborative efforts are crucial not only for aligning educational standards but also for achieving broader educational and political objectives on a global scale.

Some previous research has also been conducted to investigate the CEFR-based system of language assessments in several education institutions from across countries. Berger (2020) investigated the improvement of competency assessment and advancement within the CEFR framework for academic speaking with an emphasis on developing more accurate reference points and confirming them through keyword analysis. This research highlights the need for precision in assessment tools to ensure consistent and reliable evaluations across diverse linguistic contents. Another study by Foley (2021) discussed language education approaches (such as Communicative Language education - CLT) and the trend toward a sociolinguistic perspective. It is concerned with utilizing the CEFR and evaluating language proficiency within the framework of language training in these Asian countries. The integration of sociolinguistic elements emphasizes the adaptability of the CEFR to various cultural and linguistic environments. Furthermore, Brunfaut & Harding (2020) analyzed how systemic, the larger elements in the Luxembourgish national educational setting influence the process of developing language competency standards based on the CEFR within the framework of the *Épreuve Commune for English*, a nationwide English language examination. Their study points out the significance of national contexts in shaping the implementation of CEFR-based assessments, demonstrating the flexibility required to accommodate different educational systems.

In practical contexts, McNamara, et al. (2018) explored the potential value of CEFR in helping students of undergraduate university courses develop their writing skills in an academic setting. Natova (2021) investigated how CEFR served as a basis for developing reading comprehension tools, designed to help teachers and developers of test materials analyze text complexity and difficulty in accordance with the CEFR levels. In addition, Syafiq, et al. (2021) investigated the use of YouTube videos as English learning material, which had been adjusted with the intended CEFR level to enhance speaking skills, including fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension of the content. This proves that by supporting the production of resources that are in line with its proficiency descriptors, the CEFR has encouraged innovation in the area of teaching materials development. These studies collectively illustrate how the CEFR can be effectively integrated into various aspects of language education, from writing and reading comprehension to speaking skills. By providing a standardized framework, the CEFR allows educators to tailor resources and tools to specific proficiency levels, thereby enhancing the learning experience across different language skills.

As one of the most widely used social media platforms among today's generation, TikTok has the potential for a language learning source. TikTok videos incorporate various language strategies that align with the CEFR framework, emphasizing interaction, mediation, and production. Interaction strategies on TikTok involve structured exchanges between participants, highlighting the importance of acquiring language competency not only in grammar and vocabulary but also in facilitating natural



and meaningful conversations. This approach is crucial for effective communication in dynamic, real-time settings. Mediation strategies focus on the ability to bridge communication gaps between speakers of different languages. This includes providing comprehensive instructions to help learners and educators understand and evaluate key skills, such as summarizing, interpreting, and negotiating meaning. These strategies are essential for enabling learners to navigate complex multilingual interactions. Lastly, production strategies are concerned with assessing and understanding the distinct skills and competencies associated with language production, particularly in speaking and writing. These strategies are integral to developing fluency and accuracy in language use, making them valuable for learners to improve their expressive abilities in both formal and informal contexts.

Recent research has highlighted the growing relevance of social media platforms in language education. A study by Ika & Santosa (2023) concerning TikTok videos for learning revealed that those videos are well-suited as teaching materials for classes at the A2 proficiency level with 46% of occurrences, especially for general oral interaction activities with scores up to 291. This demonstrates the applicability of CEFR-aligned strategies in informal learning environments, highlighting the potential for social media platforms such as TikTok to enhance language mastery. The findings also emphasized the effectiveness of integrating CEFR-aligned strategies into these digital spaces, opening up new possibilities for informal yet impactful language learning. However, further research is needed to explore how these strategies can be optimized across different proficiency levels and learning contexts, particularly in relation to real-world communicative skills and educational outcomes.

Considering all stated previously mentioned, the CEFR has become a crucial resource for standardizing language proficiency levels. Widely used in education, the CEFR promotes cooperation across institutions worldwide by making curriculum creation, instruction, and learning orientation easier. Its widespread adoption emphasizes the value of a common framework in enhancing global educational practices. However, those previous studies do not considerably focus on the CEFR communicative language strategies on the TikTok application. This gap in the research is significant, given the increasing role of social media in language learning. As this present study tried to fit in the gap, this study aims to explore the existence of CEFR communicative language strategies that may be found on TikTok. The study provided the trails or the map of TikTok videos that contain CEFR language strategies. The results will be useful for the teachers to employ the use of TikTok in learning language strategies in the classroom. The finding will be particularly useful for teachers looking to integrate innovative digital tools into their teaching practices, thereby, making language education more engaging and relevant for today's learners.

This study uses the CEFR descriptor reference to analyze the types and degrees of communicative language strategies used in TikTok videos. The CEFR substitutes communicative language activities and strategies, which include some general and some communicative language strategies, for the conventional model of the four abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), to perform a task; The turn-taking, cooperating, and clarification-asking scales on the CEFR's scales for interaction strategies. The study examined the communicative language strategies utilized in TikTok videos using the CEFR descriptor reference (North & Piccardo, 2020), which has been explained in Figure 1.

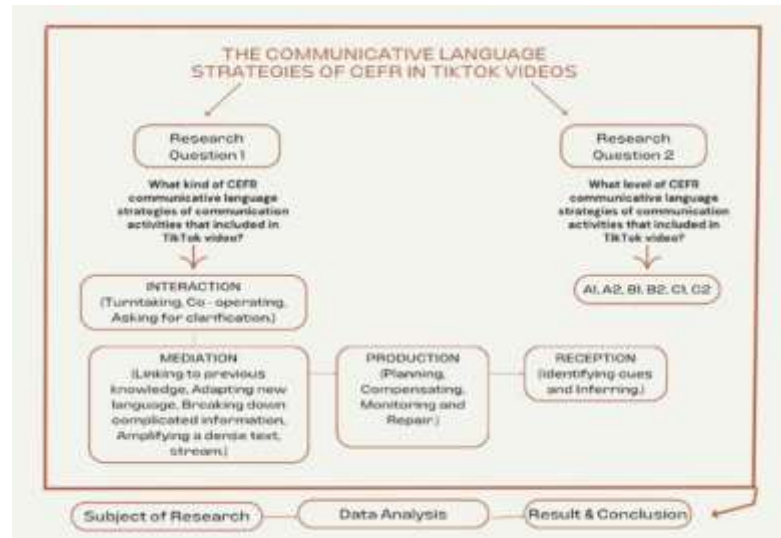


Figure 1. CEFR descriptor reference (North & Piccardo, 2020)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology, which is most appropriate for examining the content of the TikTok application. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), qualitative methods involve collecting original data by investigating sources such as books, articles, and social media texts. In this study, communication content from TikTok videos was collected and analyzed using content analysis, a method that involves examining the content in relation to the context, goals, and meanings conveyed in communications (Zaleckis et al., 2019). The data were sourced from the top 200 TikTok educational videos with the hashtags #learnenglish and #communicationstrategies, focusing on instructional content for English learning. These videos were selected based on the highest number of views and subsequently the most likes. This comprehensive approach allowed for a detailed examination of how TikTok videos align with the CEFR framework and their effectiveness in promoting language learning.

Data analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti, and the content was evaluated against the six levels of CEFR competency, ranging from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient user). The results are presented in the analysis table. Thematic analysis, a flexible qualitative research tool suited to identifying patterns and meanings in large data sets, was used to further investigate the data. This approach is particularly effective for understanding emotions, ideas, and behaviors and follows six recognized steps: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, definition and naming, and final report generation (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). By systematically analyzing these videos, the study aimed to uncover the potential of social media platforms in facilitating language education through structured communicative strategies.

Furthermore, ATLAS.ti was employed to determine and classify the types and levels of the four communicative language strategies observed. The process included: 1) uploading the 200 TikTok videos into a new document, 2) coding the four communicative strategies and their descriptions, 3) identifying the videos using the reference descriptor scale, and 4) calculating the frequency of different types and levels of communicative strategies in TikTok learning videos.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of CEFR Communicative Language Strategies

Results of the analysis revealed that there are four types of communication strategies observed in TikTok learning videos with varying display sections. The highest score is the production strategy with a score of 86 (33%), the second highest score is the mediation strategy with a score of more than 80 (30%), the third highest score is the interaction strategy with a score of more than 60 (30%), then the lowest score that can be found in the reception strategy with a score of less than 20 (7%). See the pie chart below for more details. It also illustrates and provides a more in-depth view of CEFR language communication strategies, specifically focusing on the production strategy as the most common strategy utilized in communication as presented in TikTok learning videos.

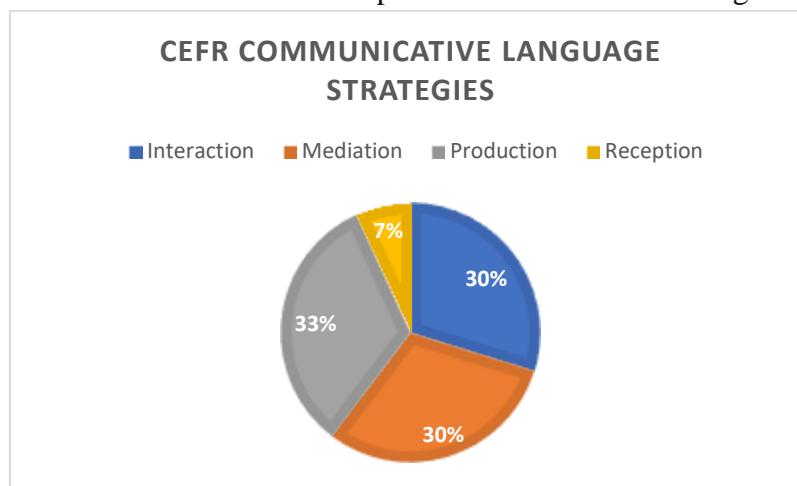


Figure 2. Types of CEFR Communicative Language Strategies

The findings show that TikTok educational videos make use of four different communication styles, each of which has a unique function within the material. The production strategy stands out the most, highlighting how crucial a role it plays in forming these videos. The mediation strategy follows closely behind and is essential for improving understanding and productive conversation. The interaction method is also very important because it makes the information much more interactive and engaging. With less than 20 points and a mere 7% of the total, the receiving technique receives the lowest score, indicating that it is used less frequently than the other strategies. The production strategy is clearly the most common method utilized in TikTok learning films, as the pie chart further demonstrates. This visual representation enhances our understanding of how different communication strategies are distributed and highlights the key roles they play in these educational settings.

Building on these findings, it is clear that TikTok learning videos mainly prioritize production and mediation strategies, which are crucial for active language use and effective communication. The high frequency of production strategies underlines their importance in content creation, allowing learners to practice and apply language skills in practical contexts. The mediation strategy's importance reflects its role in bridging gaps in understanding and facilitating comprehension, making it vital for interactive learning environments. Although the interaction strategy also holds a significant

part, its impact is slightly less compared to production and mediation, yet it remains important for engaging learners and fostering real-time communication. Conversely, the lower emphasis on reception strategies suggests a lesser focus on passive comprehension, potentially indicating that these videos prioritize active language use and application over mere reception. Overall, these insights highlight how TikTok learning videos cater to practical and interactive language learning experiences, reinforcing the value of production and mediation strategies in language acquisition.

Levels of CEFR Language Strategies

The chart below depicts the proportion of total CEFR communicative language strategies featured in the TikTok learning video. Level B1 is the most often observed, accounting for 86 scores (33%). The B2 level has the second highest rate 57 scores (22%), followed by the A2 level 56 scores (22%), and the C1 level 28 scores (11%). The lowest percentages are seen at the C2 level 16 scores (6%) and the A1 level 15 scores (6%). Based on the analysis's results, it is possible to deduce that nearly half of the research results, or 33%, suggest that the learning videos featured in TikTok are exhibited at level B1. Several learning videos include Level B1 from various CEFR communicative language strategies. The pie chart below depicts the total number of B1 level and CEFR communication strategies used in the TikTok learning video.

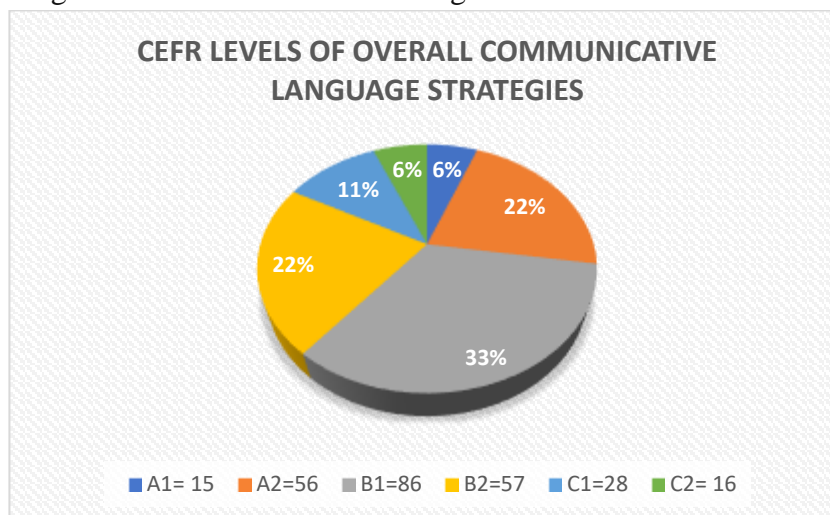


Figure 3. Levels of CEFR Language Strategies

A closer analysis of the chart shows that most TikTok videos are focused on Level B1 methods from CEFR, an intermediate level material that is relevant to a wider audience. We take a balanced pathway, appealing to both upper and lower-intermediate users with B2 or A2 strategies. At the other end of the spectrum, they make up only 4.63% and 1.41%, respectively at C1 and C2 levels while allowing for a beginner A2 level poorer representation in comparison to others (0%). Here, it is a pattern that emphasizes an important focus on the customs of learners at intermediate proficiency levels: The pie chart accompanied is indicative of the centric positioning of B1 strategies as can be seen significantly drawing more attention within CEFR framework in TikTok learning videos.

This study thoroughly examined 200 selected English learning videos disseminated using the TikTok application. The data findings shed light on the most common communication strategies, with



the production strategy, accounting for 84 videos. Further investigation finds that planning is the most commonly used descriptor category under this production strategy, which encompasses 43 of the 84 videos examined. Furthermore, the mediation strategy emerged as the second most prevalent, comprising 80 videos. while the interaction strategy secured the third position with a tally of 65 videos. Notably, the utilization of identifying cues and inferring in reception strategy was comparatively less prominent, as evidenced by their collective presence in a total of 17 videos, indicating a discernible variance in their adoption within the context of English language learning on TikTok.

Furthermore, this study aims to analyze the levels in each video investigated. The data generated from this study provided in-depth insights into the distribution of levels in the set of videos studied. The results showed that the communicative language strategy that appeared the most was the B1 Level of all CEFR strategies. The findings show that learning videos through the TikTok app are very suitable for someone who is studying at B1 Level in improving language communication strategies and learning videos can be used to teach English communication for level B1. Uygur (2021) also states at the B1 (Intermediate) level, students are able to explain their plans with justification, discuss their experiences, express ideas, dreams, and wishes through specific target language patterns, comprehend and analyze texts written at the intermediate level, express their observations from travel, and write and express facts and figures about everyday life (CEF).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

TikTok creators curate educational videos that present novel approaches to language acquisition. This analysis provides a wide range of effective CEFR communicative language strategies that educators may include in classroom materials and assignments. These strategies make planning and execution easier for both instructors directing language learning and students attempting to understand English in both spoken and written form. The strategic planning inherent in TikTok video features emphasizes a methodical approach to improving language fluency, advocating for the creation of a thoroughly designed learning plan that includes designated intervals for listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice. Regular progress evaluations and subsequent plan revisions are recommended, while language immersion through activities such as viewing movies and actively participating in discussions is encouraged.

Furthermore, the research outcomes underscore the accessibility of learning videos across diverse proficiency levels, enabling individuals to align their video consumption with their comprehension capabilities. Nevertheless, a noteworthy observation pertains to the predominant trend among content creators to produce brief learning videos, restricting the duration available for learners to engage with the instructional content. Despite this temporal constraint, numerous TikTok accounts actively disseminate information and knowledge pertinent to language acquisition through diverse production strategies. Notably, not all of these instructional videos explicitly underscore production strategies or delineate language skill levels. While these accounts may not consistently provide strategies directly correlated with CEFR levels, they nonetheless offer valuable support to learners aspiring to enhance their language skills, particularly at the B1 proficiency level.



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