education sciences

Article

Online Language Learning in Participatory Culture: Digital Pedagogy Practices in the Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the digitalisation of education around the world in a short period of time, which presented a unique opportunity for language teachers and policy makers to reconsider assumptions about language learning in higher education. Against this background, this study examines how digital pedagogy can enhance the experience of language learning in online settings in the post-pandemic era by drawing on a case study of educational activities developed during the pandemic for foreign language modules at a UK university. In particular, this study delves into the different dimensions of participatory culture in relation to digital pedagogy practices for language teaching and learning by adopting an interdisciplinary approach. Ultimately, we argue that online language education should aid students, i.e., the Gen Z cohort, in acquiring and developing digital literacy, or the capacity to communicate effectively by creating a variety of online texts and interreacting and collaborating with other people by means of various digital technologies. Therefore, it has also been argued that language teachers need to play a role as facilitators who can foster interactive, participatory environments to help students to develop student-centred, sustaining learning communities.

Keywords: digital pedagogy; online language education; participatory culture; digital literacy; post-pandemic education; United Kingdom

Citation: Ju-Zaveroni, Y.; Lee, S. Online Language Learning in Participatory Culture: Digital Pedagogy Practices in the Post-Pandemic Era. *Educ. Sci.* **2023**, *13*, 1217. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13121217

Academic Editor: James Albright

Received: 2 November 2023
Revised: 30 November 2023
Accepted: 5 December 2023
Published: 7 December 2023

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted almost every aspect of our lives—from how we live and interact with each other to how we learn and work—over the past few years. In particular, the pandemic has necessitated reassessing and challenging assumptions about teaching and learning in higher education [1–4]. Specifically, social distancing and other measures for the prevention and control of COVID-19 brought about sudden, inevitable changes in the delivery of education, especially in terms of prompting a shift from face-to-face to online settings using digital platforms. As a consequence, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the digitalisation of education around the world in just a short period of time because of the need to provide remote learning opportunities in the circumstances necessitated by the COVID-19-related social distancing rules.

Against this background, this article aims to examine how activities developed for foreign language modules during the pandemic could contribute to digital pedagogy in the post-pandemic era. To this end, this study examined various dimensions of participatory culture that could be facilitated with respect to foreign language courses. More specifically, as language teaching and learning in the context of higher education in the UK unequivocally reveal the challenges and possibilities associated with online education, the article presents a case of foreign language modules at a UK university as a way of illuminating the participatory characteristics of digital pedagogy. In doing so, it argues that language education in online settings should help students to develop their digital literacy. This literacy encompasses the ability to express themselves by producing various types of online texts as well as interreacting with other people and making social connections with them by means of various digital technologies. Given the evolving educational landscape in online settings, this study aims to address the following research questions:

- What online learning activities and communicative tasks were developed during the pandemic to facilitate student interaction and participation, as evidenced by a case study of foreign language modules in a higher education setting?
- What can the aforementioned activities and tasks within language learning modules reveal about the constitutive aspects of digital participatory culture and digital pedagogy in the post-pandemic era?

The remainder of this article is structured into four sections. Section 2 outlines the significant transition undergone by language teaching and learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a special emphasis on the challenges for language teachers, learners, and policymakers in the UK. It then examines the concept of participatory culture as a means of understanding both contemporary online environments and digital literacy. Next, Section 3 presents the description of the data and methodological framework. Section 4 presents a case study using multiple concrete examples of language teaching, learning, and assessment in online settings to show that digital pedagogy may reflect the key features of participatory culture within the new educational environments. Finally, Section 5 summarises the preceding discussion, addresses the implications of the research, and offers directions for future studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Challenges in Language Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the UK, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, made a statement in the House of Commons on 20 March 2020 in which he announced that schools would shut their gates and remain closed until further notice, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children, in order to slow the spread of the virus [5–7]. In the field of higher education, while some institutions that had run online education programmes prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic were relatively smooth in dealing with the emergency of the sudden, inevitable, and involuntary digital transformation process, many others had to adopt emergency remote teaching, which entailed an urgent, temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternative means of delivery in response to the restrictions stemming from the pandemic [8]. When offered online, such emergency remote teaching required a crisis-response migration process within the limited preparation time available for the digital transformation, which differed significantly from the well-planned online education that has been studied for decades [9].

Many universities did not have sufficient human and material resources to carefully design the transition process so as to ensure the success of the online teaching and learning experience for students [10]. The limited availability of training and preparation, the shortage of resources, and the lack of careful curriculum development all had a significant impact on the quality of the instruction provided by higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, as is evident from the results of the National Student Survey [11], both the overall student experience and students' level of satisfaction with their course decreased dramatically during the academic year 2020–2021, when the full effect of the pandemic was felt because of the lockdowns in the UK. In particular, the survey revealed students' perception of the insufficiency of the course-specific e-learning resources and technical support that they received, in addition to a weak sense of belonging.

When it comes to language education during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is particularly worth noting that prior studies indicated that the effectiveness of online learning might differ across academic disciplines. For instance, the compatibility of online learning with the social sciences and humanities was considered to be relatively effective, whereas online education was thought to exert a negative impact in relation to subjects that require hands-on practical experiences as a part of instructional activities, such as sports sciences, engineering, and medicine [12–14]. Interestingly, however, as authentic communicative tasks and practices have increasingly become an integral part of instructional activities in contemporary language education, language teachers and learners had to face the challenge of a compatibility gap when their language courses shifted from face-to-face instruction to online learning during the pandemic. In particular, in language education in Europe since the 1970s, the main focus has been on the promotion of an approach based on both the various communicative needs of learners and the use of materials and methods that are appropriate for their characteristics as learners [15]. In this regard, a critical issue concerns how face-to-face language pedagogy—which often involves interactions embedded within communicative tasks reflecting the learners' needs—can be effectively incorporated into the digital classroom in the context of the digital transformation of language education.

Furthermore, another key issue concerns the level of both students' and teachers' digital competence and the availability of information on online language teaching and learning for both groups. A majority of the contemporary students are digital natives known as "Gen Z", who have grown up surrounded by the ubiquitous influence of the internet and other modern information technologies [16]. As a result, they possess the capacity to both create and consume digital information quickly, easily, and comfortably through digital devices—not only computers but also mobile phones and tablet—and online platforms. By contrast, a substantial number of language teachers do not have the same level of digital competence and skills as the digital natives [17], which is why it took them longer to migrate and settle into emergency remote teaching. However, the issue of whether or not language teachers must exhibit digital competence and skills remains a point of dispute because such things were not traditionally required on the part of language teachers prior to the pandemic.

2.2. Digital Participatory Culture and the Evolution of Learning Environments

As outlined in the previous section, the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in challenges with respect to online education, particularly, in terms of the technical feasibility and compatibility between teachers and students within online educational environments. Online teaching and learning can be effective in technologically advanced environments in which fast internet connections and various digital devices are available [18]. Interestingly, however, internet skills by themselves have not been found to have significantly increased digital communication during the pandemic [19]. In other words, it would be fair to say that technical feasibility is a prerequisite for digital communication, but it does not guarantee the facilitation of digital communication per se. In this regard, it is worth noting that even though many university students are tech-savvy or familiar with digital technologies, they have not always been satisfied with the online learning environments available to them or found it easy to engage with online language courses in higher education settings [18,20]. This suggests that language teaching and learning in online settings require a more nuanced understanding of digital literacy, which enables teachers and students to move beyond the traditional technology-assisted language learning (TALL) that mainly foregrounds technical feasibility, such as the availability of electronic resources. Indeed, it is not always straightforward to integrate educational technologies into pedagogy. For instance, students might need different sets of skills when reading and writing different types of texts (digital vs. printed), have different degrees of motivation, or encounter different kinds of social interactions [21]. Therefore, language teachers may need a deeper understanding of digital environments and the ways in which their tech-savvy students make use of communication technologies.

In light of the above, this study suggests the concept of participatory culture and its key features to be a useful means of understanding the contemporary digital environments in which Gen Z have grown up while cultivating their communicative competence and digital literacy. "Participatory culture" is a term suggested by the media scholar Henry Jenkins during the mid-2000s as a way of defining teenagers' media-related participation [22,23]. Participatory culture is not only a term that represents the contemporary digital media culture but is also relevant to the various dimensions of online education addressed in this study. Indeed, content creation, such as video blogging (vlogging) and wiki-ing, which often entails networking and collaborating with other students, has become a crucial element of contemporary educational learning objectives, aiming to address the new behaviours, actions, and learning opportunities that have emerged in accordance with technological advances [24]. Participatory culture refers to "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices" [23] (p. xi). It primarily consists of four elements, namely affiliations, expressions, collaborative problem-solving, and circulations.

"Affiliations" refer to formal or informal belonging to online communities. While formal affiliations denote official membership, which typically involves a community-joining procedure, informal membership can be established within looser community boundaries based on a sense of shared belonging [25]. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students used to be considered an educational community that shared the same physical classroom in which they were able to immediately identify with each other without much effort. In other words, it used to be easier for students to recognise both membership and belonging within the in-person classroom setting. By contrast, it can be challenging for students to recognise peers and engage with their learning communities in online educational settings wherein students are allowed (or even required at times) to turn off their cameras and microphones. In such circumstances, a sense of community—"a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" [26] (p. 9)—is more likely to consolidate the educational communities than the official registration of courses per se. That is, a sense of community might significantly influence students' perceived experience as members of the educational communities to which they belong.

"Expressions" denote various creative forms of media production. Here, technological affordances allow ordinary people to produce, manipulate, and archive media content in the pursuit of individual interests and agendas. In particular, members of Gen Z are accustomed to producing and consuming various forms of media content, such as blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and many other types of social media posts, which can facilitate self-expression and mobilise like-minded people [23]. This suggests that such media content of various forms, genres, and contents can be understood as a primary means of self-representation and communication on the internet, while media literacy has become a crucial part of literacy in the age of digital culture. Therefore, language education in both online settings and classroom settings needs to reflect this way of understanding literacy—which is not merely verbal and textual literacy but also includes media literacy—and communication by means of various types of digital texts. As a result, teachers, including language teachers, may need to play a new role in fostering educational environments in which students can learn how to express themselves by producing content that is relevant to individuality and subjectivity.

"Collaborative problem-solving" implies that people work collectively and cooperatively to complete tasks or produce knowledge and information. In fact, the creation of knowledge and information—which play a central role in contemporary society—occurs more efficiently within communities [27]. In addition, collaboration has now become a prevalent way of generating knowledge and information that people can readily access, as is evident in the case of Wikipedia. This suggests that it is important to develop the capacity to build communities capable of utilising collective intelligence in diverse ways in today's competitive environments [27]. It is also worth noting here that the ways in which collective knowledge and information are produced and circulated often occur through the mobilisation of various resources representing individuality and subjectivity [27]. Furthermore, when students from different backgrounds—who can exchange interrelated yet differing insights—collaborate in order to complete tasks, it is more likely that they will actively engage in the learning process [28]. This indicates that "expressions" and "collaborative problem-solving" may reinforce each other in educational settings, implying that digital pedagogy should recognise students' diversity and help them to develop the abilities necessary to form communities within which they can mobilise their own resources so as to complete tasks.

"Circulations" refer to the exchange and sharing of various types of media content—not only the existing content produced by someone else but also self-produced content—by means of online platforms. This suggests that circulations are related to abilities to distribute content within networked environments and, therefore, make connections with others. In other words, students may need an understanding of different types of social media, as well as how people interact with platforms and other users, in order to communicate effectively with others through the content they produce. Moreover, it is worth mentioning here that such engagement with media sharing and dissemination may result in unpredictable media flows [29], which suggests that teachers should help students to enhance their awareness of themselves as active agents in online environments.

In sum, the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the development of effective digital pedagogy based on an understanding of digital literacy, which can substantively assist students with their learning. As a way of understanding digital literacy, this section has examined the concept of participatory culture in relation to language education. In particular, the four key features of participatory culture indicate that digital literacy does not merely refer to reading and writing texts, but may also include community involvement through the production and distribution of texts. This indicates that foreign language learners should be viewed as participants in different language communities in which they can use social, material, and semiotic resources, rather than as individuals who encounter vocabulary and grammar [30]. Therefore, in the context of digital culture, language teachers need to recognise students as collaborators and facilitate online educational settings in which they can cultivate the abilities required to search for information and knowledge within online networked environments, to express themselves through producing different kinds of texts—not only verbal texts but also other various types of texts—and to establish social connections and build communities with others.

3. Data and Methodology

This section presents a case study of online curricular activities for use in Korean as a foreign language (KFL) modules at a public university in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, we draw on illustrative examples from the Institution-Wide Language Provision (IWLP) Korean Project that was conducted at the university during the academic year 2020–2021. The IWLP Korean Project aimed to develop a systematic online Korean language programme and engage a wider range of students online. On the basis of the recommendations from the British Academy for Higher Education in the UK [31], the IWLP Korean language modules employed a communicative approach and task-based teaching to help students develop practical and constructive language skills online for critical thinking as well as employability using the language skills upon graduation.

In particular, the courses to be examined in this study were online teaching and learning modules using Blackboard Collaborate, a web conferencing tool for educational purposes, and Moodle, a learning management system (LMS), which enabled geographically dispersed students to participate in the same classes. The rapid digital transformation of language education to fully online teaching and learning modes in the higher education field in the UK as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic pushed language teachers to urgently explore the technical feasibility of alternative technology-mediated platforms in order to maintain the pedagogical objectives associated with face-to-face instruction. In this regard, Blackboard Collaborate was used for synchronous virtual lessons, in-class discussions, and small group interactions in breakout rooms. The synchronous lessons were recorded and uploaded to Moodle so that students could access them for asynchronous learning and revision. In addition, various functions of Moodle, such as the Forum, Open

Forum, Wiki, Questionnaire, Quiz, and Feedback functions, were used for online tasks and e-tivities [32] to ensure students' collaboration in the asynchronous digital learning environment.

This study adopted a qualitative approach by using the different dimensions of participatory culture described in the preceding section as an analytical framework and examined selectively chosen examples for illustrative purposes. The case study approach generally refers to a research method that examines a specific set of empirical data within a particular context to gain a detailed understanding of the subject [33,34]. In particular, a case study is a valuable tool for exploring a contemporary phenomenon, especially when the contextual conditions have a strong connection to the subject under investigation [34]. Therefore, in order to examine the language learning activities designed within the rapidly digitalised environment during the pandemic, this study employed an interdisciplinary case study approach.

Specifically, we analysed the content of online learning activities by drawing on the key features of digital participatory culture as an analytical framework. Even though content analysis is not traditionally regarded as a well-established method in education when compared to methods such as interviews, surveys, and experiments, we chose to employ it in our case study to gain a deep understanding of the digital environment as an integral platform for contemporary communication. In fact, the qualitative case study approach still had a limitation in terms of its generalisability. However, this study aimed to achieve an in-depth understanding of interactive teaching and learning in online settings. It also aimed to provide a basis for further research and curriculum design by offering actionable insights derived from the case study.

The following subsections address examples of educational practices in relation to the key dimensions of participatory culture—namely, affiliations, expressions, collaborative problem-solving, and circulations—respectively.

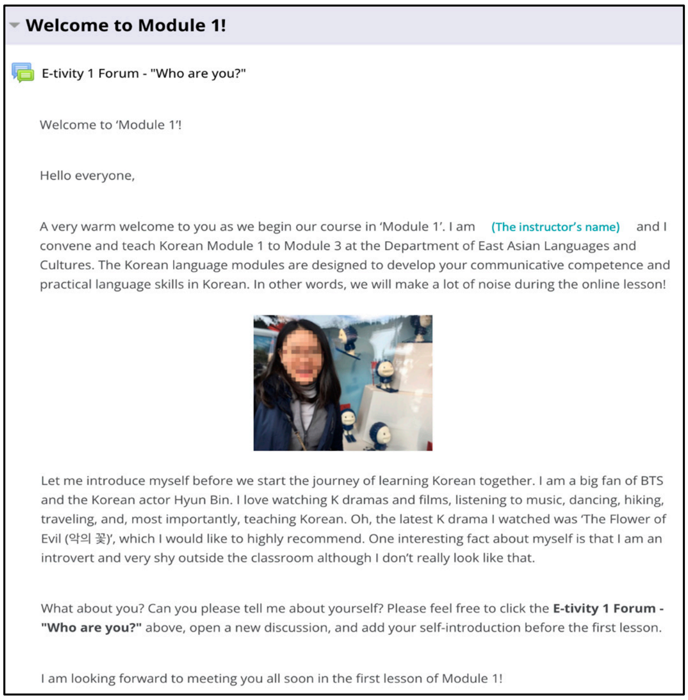
4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Consolidating a Sense of Belonging

The first example is from online asynchronous learning activities and tasks, the so-called "e-tivities" [32]. E-tivities are designed to activate learners to collaborate with each other and lead them to independent and autonomous learning through interactions in their online community. For successful online learning using e-tivities, learners should perceive the online course as a social environment where they exchange and share their opinions and feelings freely with their peers [35]. In the IWLP Korean language modules, various e-tivities were also developed to help students engage more effectively with the learning community. For instance, as shown in Figure 1, the teacher used the "Forum" function of Moodle and opened the first e-tivity to break the ice at the beginning of the term and encourage students to share their self-introduction as follows:

The teacher first welcomed students and introduced herself in a casual, friendly manner and then encouraged students to participate in the e-tivity by introducing themselves online. This activity can help students to perceive the feeling of the teacher's presence in the given circumstance that they cannot actually meet the teacher and immediately recognise each other. It can also facilitate online socialisation by interacting with other students. As shown in Figure 2, Student 2 who found something in common with Student 1 responded to Student 1 with further questions and comments.

This process of identification reflects the ways in which affiliations are formed within a participatory culture, where shared interests and active communication play a crucial role. Affiliations within a participatory culture can take various forms, including online communities, forums, as well as offline gatherings. By engaging in this kind of e-tivity—an asynchronous activity on Blackboard—educational communities can expand their sense of affiliation, fostering mutual recognition and a feeling of belongingness within the online forum. Traditionally, affiliations were primarily associated with official enrolment in a course and face-to-face communication in class. However, e-tivities provide an avenue for establishing these connections in the online environment. Furthermore, even though this particular e-tivity may not be directly educational, this affinity-building process can enhance students' affective engagement, subsequently benefiting their participation in cognitively demanding and collaborative tasks [36].



Welcome to Module 1!

E-tivity 1 Forum - "Who are you?"

Welcome to 'Module 1'!

Hello everyone,

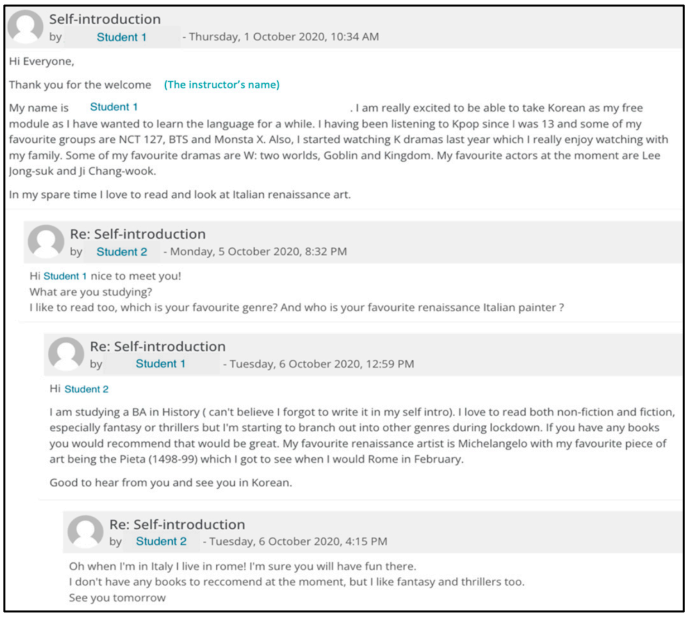
A very warm welcome to you as we begin our course in 'Module 1'. I am (The instructor's name) and I convene and teach Korean Module 1 to Module 3 at the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. The Korean language modules are designed to develop your communicative competence and practical language skills in Korean. In other words, we will make a lot of noise during the online lesson!

Let me introduce myself before we start the journey of learning Korean together. I am a big fan of BTS and the Korean actor Hyun Bin. I love watching K dramas and films, listening to music, dancing, hiking, traveling, and, most importantly, teaching Korean. Oh, the latest K drama I watched was 'The Flower of Evil (악의 꽃)', which I would like to highly recommend. One interesting fact about myself is that I am an introvert and very shy outside the classroom although I don't really look like that.

What about you? Can you please tell me about yourself? Please feel free to click the **E-tivity 1 Forum - "Who are you?"** above, open a new discussion, and add your self-introduction before the first lesson.

I am looking forward to meeting you all soon in the first lesson of Module 1!

Figure 1. Example of e-tivities.



Self-introduction
by Student 1 - Thursday, 1 October 2020, 10:34 AM

Hi Everyone,

Thank you for the welcome (The instructor's name)

My name is Student 1 . I am really excited to be able to take Korean as my free module as I have wanted to learn the language for a while. I having been listening to Kpop since I was 13 and some of my favourite groups are NCT 127, BTS and Monsta X. Also, I started watching K dramas last year which I really enjoy watching with my family. Some of my favourite dramas are W: two worlds, Goblin and Kingdom. My favourite actors at the moment are Lee Jong-suk and Ji Chang-wook.

In my spare time I love to read and look at Italian renaissance art.

Re: Self-introduction
by Student 2 - Monday, 5 October 2020, 8:32 PM

Hi Student 1 nice to meet you!
What are you studying?
I like to read too, which is your favourite genre? And who is your favourite renaissance Italian painter ?

Re: Self-introduction
by Student 1 - Tuesday, 6 October 2020, 12:59 PM

Hi Student 2

I am studying a BA in History (can't believe I forgot to write it in my self intro). I love to read both non-fiction and fiction, especially fantasy or thrillers but I'm starting to branch out into other genres during lockdown. If you have any books you would recommend that would be great. My favourite renaissance artist is Michelangelo with my favourite piece of art being the Pieta (1498-99) which I got to see when I would Rome in February.

Good to hear from you and see you in Korean.

Re: Self-introduction
by Student 2 - Tuesday, 6 October 2020, 4:15 PM

Oh when I'm in Italy I live in rome! I'm sure you will have fun there.
I don't have any books to reccomend at the moment, but I like fantasy and thrillers too.
See you tomorrow

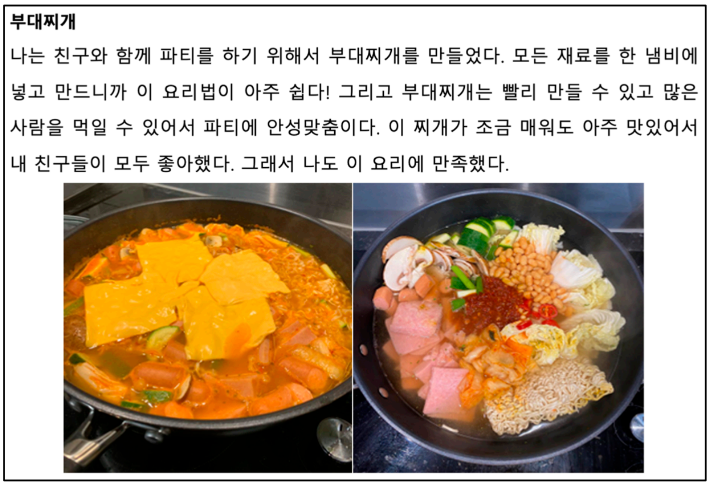
Figure 2. Example of students' interaction in the e-tivity of self-introduction. (Students' names have been removed from the example and replaced with Student 1 and Student 2 for their privacy).

4.2. Representing Individual Interests

A portfolio can be an excellent complement to students' academic and professional development in higher education from both a methodological and an evaluative approach [37–39]. Language learner portfolios include a process of collecting students' work or artefacts as evidence of progress or learning over time, which are assessed against specific criteria [39]. The IWLP Korean language modules adopted a digital format of the portfolio, the so-called Electronic Language Learning Portfolio (also known as an e-portfolio or online portfolio) to replace a paper-based predigital portfolio and continuously facilitate students' autonomous and versatile learning under adverse circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. An e-portfolio is a representative, purposeful collection of electronic evidence of learning and growth over time, which is developed, assembled, and managed by language learners online using digital tools. The e-portfolio of the IWLP Korean language modules was specifically designed to encourage postgraduate students to develop their communicative competence and practical language skills in Korean and widen their intercultural experience in their subject area by using online platforms. An e-portfolio keeps an online record of their ongoing language learning and cultural experience and thus helps them to reflect on their autonomous language learning as both objects and methods of assessment. Such electronic evidence may include inputted text, electronic files (e.g., audio recordings and videos), images, blog entries, and hyperlinks.

Each student was expected to choose their favoured digital formats (e.g., written or spoken online artefacts, or audio or video files) to develop the e-portfolio for their interests, which they found necessary or effective in the progress of their language learning. Throughout the procedure, students selected their work and archived them in their e-portfolio that best exhibited their progress and achievement of the curriculum goals in their Korean language module. Furthermore, students' e-portfolios were accessible to the fellow students of the same Korean language module at LMS for peer reviews and feedback, which motivated students to cooperate to achieve the curriculum goals of their language module and progress forward in the development of their e-portfolio. By the end of the teaching terms, each student developed their own, individual online collection of reflective and creative materials within their interests by using their favoured digital tools and submitted the e-portfolio online for summative assessment.

For instance, as shown in Figure 3, one MA student who enjoyed cooking developed her own online cooking journal as a part of her e-portfolio throughout the year. The student included her own reflective summary and actual photographs of her cuisine as well as recipes and lists of ingredients to improve her writing and description skills in Korean on the basis of her interests. After the e-portfolio was completed and submitted online, students' constructive, reflective feedback on their experience of developing the e-portfolio was collected for further improvement in the digital format of language learning portfolios as a formative and summative assessment tool of the IWLP Korean language modules.



부대찌개

나는 친구와 함께 파티를 하기 위해서 부대찌개를 만들었다. 모든 재료를 한 냄비에 넣고 만드니까 이 요리법이 아주 쉽다! 그리고 부대찌개는 빨리 만들 수 있고 많은 사람을 먹일 수 있어서 파티에 안성맞춤이다. 이 찌개가 조금 매워도 아주 맛있어서 내 친구들이 모두 좋아했다. 그래서 나도 이 요리에 만족했다.

Figure 3. A student's online journal on Korean food and cooking. (Translation of the Korean text in Figure 3: I cooked *Budaejjigae* (Korean spicy sausage stew) for a party with my friends. This recipe is very easy because you put all the ingredients in one pot! Also, as *Budaejjigae* is quick to cook and can feed a lot of people, it is perfect for parties. All my friends loved this stew because it was very tasty even though it was a bit spicy. So I was also satisfied with the dish).

This example demonstrates how expressions—various forms of creative production—encouraged in participatory culture can be effectively integrated into foreign language learning. Expressions are a vital component of participatory culture that emphasises active engagement and creative expression in pursuit of individual interests, which also significantly impacts the literacy skills of Gen Z. This example suggests how students can learn a variety of communication skills by choosing their preferred method of communication, i.e., online journaling in this case. This student could acquire and develop an ability to create electronic texts, which required a different writing process beyond handwriting, such as typing texts in Korean on their electronic device and adding multimodal resources such as photographs to a text by producing this blog-type e-portfolio. Furthermore, as students can also freely choose topics for their content, e-portfolios can be seen as a beneficial tool for incorporating students' individuality and diversity into the language education curriculum that fulfils the different needs and interests of students from diverse backgrounds.

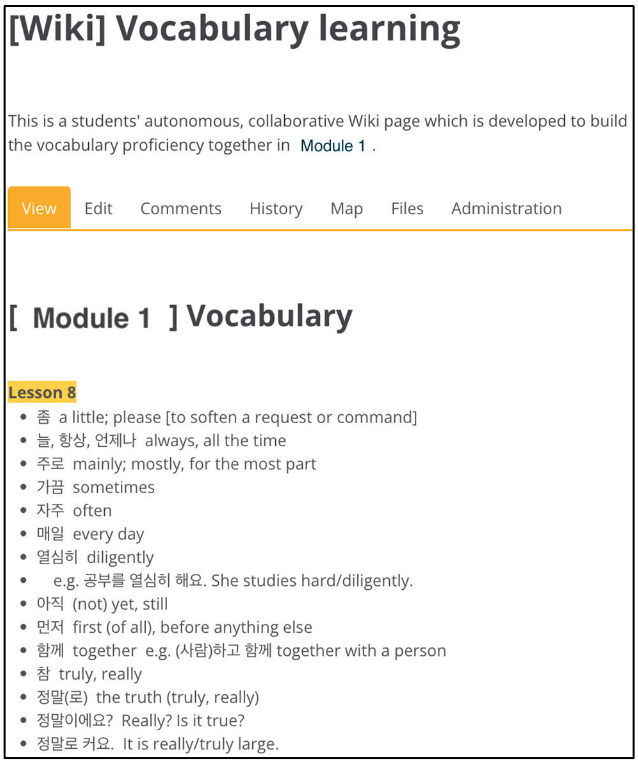
4.3. Generating Collective Information

Vocabulary is a crucial part of language learning because it underpins all other language skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As learners develop greater fluency in the target language, it is significant for them to discover effective vocabulary learning strategies and build more productive vocabulary knowledge for meaningful communication. Nevertheless, in a classroom setting, vocabulary is still often taught in a traditional way wherein language teachers give vocabulary lists to learners and the learners translate them and make their own personal vocabulary notes to memorise the vocabulary [40]. Therefore, in order to help students' autonomous, collaborative vocabulary learning at the beginner's level of the IWLP Korean language modules, a vocabulary Wiki was developed.

Wiki is a collaborative webpage with an open editing system that allows people to add, edit, and remove content. In an e-learning setting where strong self-motivation and time management skills are required, Wiki can be an effective tool for learning vocabulary through interaction and collaboration with peers [41]. In the IWLP beginner's module, the teacher first addressed the effectiveness of learning vocabulary by using Wiki and presented how to start and build Wiki on Moodle with a few examples.

As shown in Figure 4, following the examples the teacher provided, students autonomously added vocabulary that they newly learned in the lesson with examples or edited the vocabulary list to improve it. Learning vocabulary using online Wiki offers students an opportunity to collaboratively develop or modify the course content as co-creators of knowledge [42] by actively engaging and contributing to the development of learning resources. Moreover, contributing to the collective knowledge within their learning community can reinforce a sense of affiliation among students [26].

As mentioned earlier, Wiki-type knowledge generation and sharing exemplify collaborative problem-solving within a participatory culture. In other words, Wiki vocabulary learning showcases how individuals can work together in an online participatory environment to achieve meaningful outcomes. Through this collective intelligence-based practice, students can effectively expand their individual knowledge. Furthermore, within the digitally networked environment, the wiki data are extractable and transferable to other mobile apps or webpages for easy access, learners can readily develop their own personal vocabulary learning strategies by using the collective wiki data. This practice can also maximise the advantages of collective problem-solving by bringing together a diverse group of people with varying experiences and knowledge. Since this practice involves students' authentic knowledge, students can accumulate and develop collective knowledge in unexpected but useful ways. For instance, as illustrated in the example above, students not only add words used to express frequency, such as "always", "mostly", "sometimes", "often", and "every day", but also included other words that frequently appear alongside those frequency expressions, such as "diligently", "first", and "together". In this way, students can efficiently enhance their linguistic capabilities. Therefore, Wiki can be a useful tool for independent and collaborative language learning. Particularly, it promotes student-led learning in socially interactive online environments, where students can actively contribute and shape their learning experiences.



[Wiki] Vocabulary learning

This is a students' autonomous, collaborative Wiki page which is developed to build the vocabulary proficiency together in Module 1 .

[Module 1] Vocabulary

Lesson 8

- 좀 a little; please [to soften a request or command]
- 늘, 항상, 언제나 always, all the time
- 주로 mainly; mostly, for the most part
- 가끔 sometimes
- 자주 often
- 매일 every day
- 열심히 diligently
- e.g. 공부를 열심히 해요. She studies hard/diligently.
- 아직 (not) yet, still
- 먼저 first (of all), before anything else
- 함께 together e.g. (사람)하고 함께 together with a person
- 참 truly, really
- 정말(로) the truth (truly, really)
- 정말이에요? Really? Is it true?
- 정말로 커요. It is really/truly large.

Figure 4. Initial stage of vocabulary Wiki.

4.4. Circulating Self-Produced Content

In relation to students' e-portfolios discussed in Section 4.2, another prominent advantage of online learning environments is the facets of usability and accessibility across various digital tools and technology platforms. These features allowed students to generate their learning by developing the e-portfolios and, eventually, circulating them online openly as their own achievements and products of language learning, which used to be limited almost exclusively to the teacher and occasionally to peers in the face-to-face classroom.

For instance, as shown in Figure 5, one MA student who had work experience in theatre production and play produced reflective daily vlogs by using her professional skills and posted them on YouTube.

This activity can also be seen as a form of expression in participatory culture, specifically as audiovisual content. By doing so, the student practiced speaking and presentation skills in Korean, which she felt were her weakest areas to improve among the various language skills. Furthermore, the student maintained a track record of her language learning by uploading the vlogs on YouTube.

As for the sharing option, the student "unlisted" the vlogs on YouTube, which is the option between "Public" and "Private" settings so that her unlisted videos could be seen and shared by anyone with the video link. The teacher and other MA students, as well as those whom the student shared the link with, could watch the vlogs and listen to the narrative of her reflection and growth in language learning. They could also share their impression by clicking the "like" or "dislike" buttons and leaving comments under each video. The reflective YouTube videos were a new online format of purposeful collections for the student to use for learning and practicing the target language. The student also used the vlogs to interact and communicate with wider audiences by using the language skills that she acquired from her language module and obtaining their responses beyond the online classroom setting.

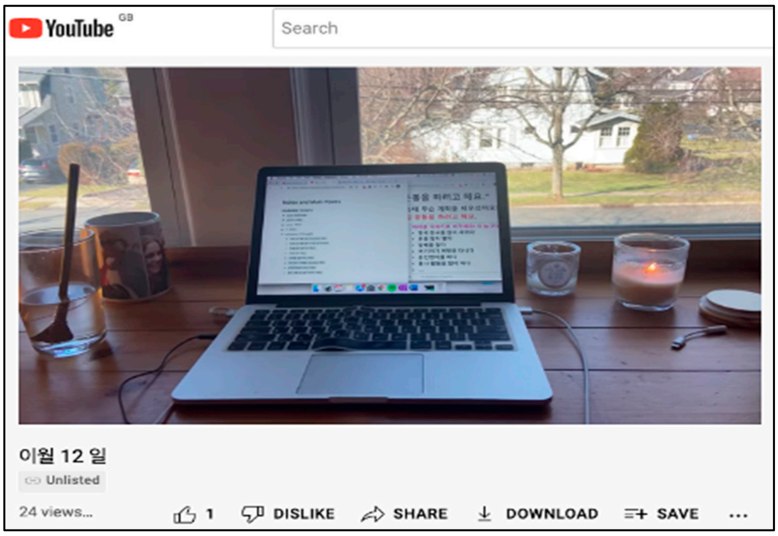


Figure 5. A student's daily vlog on YouTube as a part of e-portfolio (The title of the video written in Korean in the screenshot is '12 February').

This practice unequivocally exemplifies the circulation of participatory culture, involving the ability to disseminate and share content through online platforms. In particular, the student's content sharing on YouTube allows her to apply her foreign language skills in authentic situations by bringing her language learning experience into real-world interactions and communication. This example suggests that language learning activities, which encompass active participation in content production and circulation, in the digitally networked environment can extend beyond the traditional classroom and even transcend the limitations of the online classroom.

5. Conclusions

The implementation of social distancing and other prevention measures for COVID-19 brought about remarkable changes in higher education in the UK by prompting a shift from face-to-face to online settings by using digital platforms in a short period of time. The rapid shift to digital teaching and learning during the pandemic provided several challenges and opportunities for both teachers and students to explore alternative technology-mediated platforms. Against this background, the present study examined how digital pedagogy could be successfully incorporated into language education in the post-pandemic era by investigating online activities for foreign language modules developed during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the various features of participatory culture.

Recalling the pandemic era, the transition to online settings was an inevitable choice for universities to keep their students and faculties safe from the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus. Nevertheless, the sudden digital transformation in higher education has profoundly evolved the educational landscape in the UK during the pandemic. Given the circumstances, it is crucial to examine how such changes to online settings influence the perception of teaching and learning in the post-pandemic transformation of higher education. The investigation of the perception of digital literacy in light of participatory culture and the various online activities presented in this study depict that synchronous online lessons are only a partial alternative to face-to-face teaching; they need to be accompanied with well-designed asynchronous instructions and activities. The asynchronous elements of the online course amplify students' learning by arousing their active participation and interaction outside the online synchronous classroom and expanding the role of students as co-creators of knowledge in their courses.

In foreign language education, such a holistic approach to synchronous and asynchronous online settings reinforces the progressive shift in the role of teachers that teachers should play a new role as facilitators, transcending the conventional role as knowledge transmitters, by guiding students to form their autonomous, student-centred, sustaining learning communities in the online settings. Accordingly, the appropriate level of digital competence and skills to boost students' participation and interaction in online settings is not an option but a necessity for language teachers. It is critical for teachers to understand participatory culture as a way of understanding Gen Z and their digital literacy and eventually to meet their new expectations and demands in higher education in the post-pandemic era. Ultimately, the increased importance of interactivity in online settings reflects paradigm shifts from language acquisition to learning and then to participation as digital pedagogy incorporates contemporary teaching and learning strategies in the post-pandemic era.

In summary, our findings suggest that practices and policies in language learning should support training and professional development for teachers to improve their ability to effectively utilise digital tools and platforms. This, in turn, enables them to create well-designed learning activities that can significantly benefit students in the real world. Relatedly, it will be beneficial to establish practices and policies for monitoring and understanding student expectations, ensuring that language learning in higher education aligns with these expectations. This can involve integrating contemporary teaching and learning strategies to provide a more student-centred and personalised learning experience in higher education settings.

Finally, while this study has aimed to provide a comprehensive insight into interactive language education in online settings and to serve as a valuable resource for designing foreign language curriculum for similar courses, it does have limitations. In particular, this research did not include an assessment of students' engagement in evaluating the effectiveness of the activities investigated, such as through interviews and surveys. Therefore, we hope that future research will address this limitation by examining how language learning activities can be further developed by evaluating students' progress and understanding their responses, which should evolve to cater to the changing needs and desires of learning in dynamic communicative environments.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.L.; methodology, Y.J.-Z. and S.L.; formal analysis, Y.J.-Z. and S.L.; investigation, Y.J.-Z. and S.L.; data curation, Y.J.-Z.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.J.-Z. and S.L.; writing—review and editing, S.L. and Y.J.-Z.; funding acquisition, S.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was partially supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea. The Grant Number is NRF-2021S1A6A3A01097826. The research was not funded but approved by SOAS (271493).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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