

Post-Pandemic Innovations in EFL Oral Communication: Bridging Challenges and Opportunities Through Actionable Strategies

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences of 54 Japanese EFL university students in online oral communication classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. Positive outcomes included increased confidence, fluency, and listening skills, while challenges such as limited engagement and reduced speaking opportunities were noted. The findings stress the need for a student-centered curriculum that balances speaking and listening skills, fosters motivation, and provides a supportive environment. To address these issues, the study recommends incorporating role-plays, real-life communication tasks, and hybrid learning models that blend online and in-person formats. Strategies like goal-setting, formative feedback, and structured approaches to skill-building enhance engagement and oral proficiency. This research emphasizes actionable improvements in curriculum design by leveraging lessons from the pandemic. It advocates for adaptable, inclusive, and interactive teaching approaches, preparing students for global communication challenges through practical, real-world applications and collaborative activities.

Keywords: EFL (English as a Foreign Language), Oral Communication, Online Learning, Hybrid Learning Models, Student-Centered Curriculum, Speaking Skills, Listening Skills, Engagement Strategies