Chapter 12
Public Pedagogy Approach Towards Online Language Instruction:
Use of Fandom With a Dialogic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Thanks to the widespread use of social media among individuals, the new site for the public pedagogy can be based on 'fandom', which is strongly related to fan-related practices on websites, forums, pages, and channels. These venues are based on shared interests and enjoyment and are visited by thousands of people every day. Inspired by increasing popularity, fandom has been used in academic education for the last decade. In line with this, there is also a growing research interest in the use of fandom in foreign/second language teaching; however, this should be within a purposeful way to enrich the opportunities for online learning. Therefore, this chapter sets out to provide practical implications about the operationalization of fandom in online language instruction to promote interaction among learners, which is quite necessary, particularly in the time of school closures due to the pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns have been implemented and schools have been closed down temporarily across the world. As a result of these circumstances, a shift to remote teaching has taken place. When the teachers have no choice other than online delivery, they are forced to give up the traditional methods of teaching; therefore, this crisis has changed the way education is conducted and encouraged innovative implementations (Dhawan, 2020). Accordingly, there is a need for educators to investigate the technological affordances to bridge the communication gap with their students in the pandemic (Karakaya, 2021). Thus, it urged to incorporate 'new' learning experiences into the

instructional implementations for effective learning outcomes (Orlov, et al., 2021). Considering that the interaction lies at the heart of the language learning/teaching and the lack of face-to-face interaction, it is possible to say that language instruction becomes perplexed amid pandemic. It is essential to find out the best online instructional design; that is, the materials and course content should address students' interactional needs. They are expected to be motivating, authentic and appealing for the students since they can easily lose their ability to focus while studying at home.

Despite the immediate transition from face-to-face delivery to online teaching with the outbreak of the pandemic, simply transferring the same content with the same methods employed in the face-to-face instruction cannot be acceptable. While the pandemic has exacerbated the current instructional settings, it has also made visible the need to understand the dynamics pertaining to online delivery. Consequently, when the pandemic is over, there may not be 'normal' that was experienced before but a 'new normal' (Neuwirth, Jovic, & Mukherji, 2020). As such, the teachers should be prepared for this evolving instructional change.

Not surprisingly, the Internet has also become an integral part of education as it provides a rich source of materials for students and teachers, and it offers a flexible learning environment where everyone could work at their own pace. Thomas and Brown (2011) call it a "new culture of learning" which signifies that education is not bounded to traditional classroom settings and that learning can happen in every phase of life. Movies, streets, or even public transportations can be the ideal venues for learning (Hochtritt et al., 2018). This brings to the fore the "public pedagogy" which refers to the form of education concerned with teaching and learning in extra-institutional settings (Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011). Considering the fact that roughly four billion people are users of social media around the world (Kemp, 2020), and that the average time spent on social media was estimated as nearly 2,5 hours in 2018 (Metev, 2020), it will be noteworthy to indicate that the new site for the public pedagogy in 21st century is 'social media' thanks to the widespread use (Reid, 2010). Social media is a massive space with lots of applications, pages, and websites. In this mountain of content, it is revealed that fandom is a booming phenomenon. For instance, only Star Wars fans make up 1 in 4 internet users across the world (Global Web Index, 2019). Given other fanbases, this implies that there is a huge community of fandom in the internet world. Fandom is based on the shared interests of the individuals; thus, people can exchange their opinions, post comments, and follow updates, engage in discussions in fandom spaces. Booth (2015) asserts that fandom can be considered as a "classroom of the future" from which the educational systems can benefit. Therefore, increasing the opportunities for e-learning by offering real-life content, fandoms can be useful to enrich the online delivery amid and post-pandemic.

As fan studies emerge as a specific discipline, teaching with fandom is substantially emphasized (Howell, 2018). In addition to that, fan activities seemed to be linked with academic teaching because learning today is based on genuine production (Aronsson, Fjordevik, & Inose, 2018). In line with this view, the significance of fandom activities is discussed in language teaching (DeLuca, 2018; Kralova, 2019; Sauro, 2014; Williams, 2006). For example, DeLuca (2018) shows that fandom spaces can be new locations where multimodal writing can be promoted as fandom sites are multimodal environments with different semiotic resources such as text, audio, and video. Kralova (2019), similarly, points out that fan activities including reading fanfiction and communicating with other fans have a positive impact on English language skills. Likewise, Sauro (2014) states that fandom tasks can be the authentic and creative practices for language teaching classes. In addition, in Williams' research (2006), it is found out that anime fandom increases the Japanese language students' motivation towards learning Japanese culture. These studies illustrate that the use of fandoms is relevant for language teaching pedagogy and it offers

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