Introduction: As COVID-19 spreads across the world and therefore campuses had to terminate offering residential classes, a tremendous amount of learners were forced to continue their study online. Salim Sönmez, one of the learners currently enrolled in the community language program at Teachers College, Columbia University, who agreed to be cited for the purposes of this research, complained that he felt uncomfortable when taking classes online and therefore he became unwilling to participate in class interactions and to build deep connections with teachers and peers.

While Salim and his classmates acknowledged that online learning allows for time flexibility, revisiting content, and can be accessed from virtually anywhere, they still felt hesitant to attend online classes after the pandemic, as they claimed that a situated learning environment will prompt more interactions and therefore improve their communicative competence.

As COVID-19 spotlighted online learning on the stage, many learners realized the benefits of online learning and expressed the willingness to continue learning second languages online after the pandemic, but they also worry about the deficiency of online learning - inadequate interactions due to the anxiety of feeling physically distant with teachers and classmates. Thus, many second language learners such as Salim Sönmez fall into a dilemma to choose the best learning mode in life after COVID-19.

Market Research: Why does the adult ESL E-learning market matter? The North America E-learning market is estimated to reach a valuation of USD 135 billion by the year 2026 (GlobeNewswire, 2020). The growth can be attributed to booming development in the 5G spectrum field and increasing internet penetration across the region. Meanwhile, the adult segment constitutes almost half of the global English language learning market share, with China and the USA leading the country's market share (Adroit Market Research, 2018).

Design Rationale: Compared with existing virtual reality ESL products like Immerse and Play2Speak, we situate learners in VR scenarios designed using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with a focus on pragmatics, so that learners practice with relevant tasks that they need to accomplish in real life in socially appropriate ways. Unlike our competitors' synchronous model, we adopt a self-paced approach coupled with automated speech assessment and game-based learning to offer maximum flexibility and engagement to our busy learners who work full-time.

Prototype Demonstration: Now, to the product demonstration: 1) we use gamification and task-based objectives in a 360 virtual environment. 2) students are guided with supportive videos on tasks to perform. 3) students are then immersed in the environment and have to move within each environment to complete the task. 4) students are also assessed within the environment to check if learning has occurred.

Prototype Link: https://jmvcfa.h5p.com/content/1291167323380329118

Conclusion: To address the lack of physical presence, we created an interactive, situated and self-paced **i**mmersive VR learning environment**,** offering comfort in remote pragmatics English learning. As the adult ESL market in the USA is predicted to increase after covid, our product not only has educational value but also tremendous market growth potential.

1. Market Study Report, L. (2020, November 11). North America e-learning market size to reach USD 135 billion mark by 2026.
https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/11/11/2124435/0/en/North-America-e-learning-market-size-to-reach-USD-135-billion-mark-by-2026.html
2. Global English Language Learning Market Size, Share & Industry Forecast 2018-2025. (n.d.). from
https://www.adroitmarketresearch.com/industry-reports/english-language-learning-market