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ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL REALITY TOOLS IN ESL CLASSROOM

This article presents about numerous studies in the field of teaching foreign languages indicating a direct connection between student success and the personalization of the curriculum and the level of interest in it. This is facilitated by tools that increase the plot of the lessons – storytelling, discussion of videos, cards with pictures and situations. In the course of this work, the development and testing of a new strategy for teaching English using VR is described. This technique allows to receive educational information through several channels of perception at once, stimulating cognitive synthesis and more complete participation of integrative brain structures in the learning process, which increases the student’s ability to memorize. Elements of gamification and the very fact of using gaming technology awaken and increase the interest of students. Also, the introduction of virtual reality technology makes it possible to expand the arsenal of used multimedia materials, adding interactive excursions and access to video archives around the world. The experience gained in the course of this work made it possible to start developing a full-fledged curriculum for students in combination with an application for smartphones and tablets.

Keywords: English, teaching, methodology, virtual reality.

Introduction

Innovation is a trigger for progress in any area. Innovations in the educational system help students learn the required material faster and more fully. The introduction of new technologies expands the cognitive capabilities of students: we can already see how effective video applications for lessons, educational videos, listening or using presentations are.

New technologies are helping to overcome force majeure challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated new social distancing rules that have

created unexpected obstacles to education. Every year, the quality and accessibility of education is increasingly dependent on digital innovation.

Despite the need to improve the technical equipment of educational institutions, this area remains quite conservative. As it turned out in the course of this study, even the current technical potential is not being adequately used.

At the same time, the need for proficiency in foreign languages is increasing every year. Many disciplines remain applied and narrowly focused, requiring only a basic level of knowledge in adulthood. Foreign languages, especially English, are among the most in-demand skills today, along with the ability to think logically and correctly express one's point of view – the level of international communication has increased significantly both in the course of working relations and in terms of opportunities to get an education at any university in the world [1].

There is an opinion that a full-fledged English-speaking environment is required for the practical consolidation of language skills. However, the experience of people who immigrated to English-speaking countries suggests the opposite: a cognitive barrier remains due to the psychological uncertainty of a person that he will be able to correctly understand others and express his thoughts. Due to this, the relevance of educational strategies increases, which involve a deeper immersion in the language environment, but at the same time do not provoke such an illusion of failure in the student [2].

Modern digital technologies make it possible to create an interactive multimedia environment that sufficiently trains the skills of speaking and writing in a foreign language, but at the same time does not put the student in front of the need to «now and immediately» achieve mutual understanding with the interlocutor who has a higher level of English understanding. It should be emphasized that the active inclusion of IT tools in the educational process does not at all exclude traditional teaching methods, but is harmoniously combined with them at all stages of education. At the same time, the use of a computer allows not only to greatly increase the effectiveness of teaching, but also to motivate students to further study the English language.

The general informatization of society denies a significant impact both on the education system and on our life as a whole, due to which the deserved attention began to be paid to this type of speech activity as written speech. The opportunity to write personal and official letters helps students to master written communication in the target language, the need to fill out questionnaires, forms of documents [3].

Materials and methods

Teaching a foreign language as a specialty involves mastering not only practical knowledge, but also a deep knowledge of the theory of language. At the same time, the teaching of theoretical disciplines today does not fully meet modern requirements. This is, first of all, insufficient consideration of

modern trends in linguistics, in particular, the achievements of such sciences as communicative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and intercultural communication. The basis of the communicative approach is the desire to learn the language in its real functioning, in the conditions of a specific communication situation in accordance with the goals communicators. The communicative approach, which presupposes the consideration of a functioning language as a dynamic, activity-related process, penetrates into all levels of the language system, which is quite natural, since it contributes to a more complete coverage of the essence of the phenomenon under study [4]. We have studied and structured data on the use of VR technologies in the field of commercial education. We also studied the latest experimental developments of leading IT corporations. We studied and analyzed the official statistics of digitalization in universities in Kazakhstan over the past 2 years, including assessments of its effectiveness in teaching. The essence of the VR methodology is to integrate existing VR technologies into the optimal learning strategies, determined from my previous research on modern methods of learning English. The development of experimental programs and multimedia used simple, affordable and university-based solutions to execute key strategies. In order to increase the level of personalization, we created various program templates – tasks for students could differ depending on their gender, age, temperament and level of knowledge. The method of finding the interlocutor was carried out in a playful way in the virtual space. We also used virtual excursions to interesting places with searching for objects or interior features, reading signs and going through role scripts. For oral retelling with conclusions, interactive video scenes were created in addition to standard stories. In some tasks, elements of script recognition were used: in order to continue watching an interesting scene, you had to try to guess the further plot. Standard observation maps were transformed into mini-quests conducted in virtual space, followed by discussion in class. Quests were accompanied by storytelling: students received content in the form of a story, cartoon or video. The content has been divided into episodes shown after completing the quest stage, with an open ending to spark interest in the next episode and an ending at the end of the lesson. The assignments were designed in a positive way, with funny everyday situations and fantastic adventures, to create a comfortable atmosphere in which the student forgets his complexes and uses the language in a relaxed way. Some tasks simulated situations in which the student could find himself in the future as an adult; these situations were resolved positively when choosing the correct replica. This approach made it possible to emphasize the role of language communication and give an additional incentive to learning English. In each task, a special role was assigned to the teacher, who acted as a guide and motivator. Almost all tasks, after completing them, involved collective analysis and conclusions. In the course

of the research, we collected information about the educational process through direct observation, surveys and questionnaires of students and teachers. Direct observation made it possible to assess the involvement: the percentage of active and passive students, the speed of completing tasks, the desire to complete several tasks in a row. The questionnaire was aimed mainly at identifying the motivation of students for subsequent comparison with the standard educational process. Oral interviews performed a similar function. Since the previous study identified the leading role of student engagement, the current study primarily assessed student engagement using VR technology in standard learning strategies. I attended classes and recorded the level of activity of students, their participation in the educational process. All results were grouped and classified. The effectiveness of the methodology is analyzed in comparison with standard teaching strategies, conclusions are drawn, a plan for improving the methodology and further research is developed. Questionnaires, transcripts, video surveillance data and maps of student interaction with virtual reality devices were categorized and summarized. The most valuable method was direct observation of the educational process. The students' answers in the questionnaires helped to assess the sustainability of motivation to study after classes were over and an additional trigger of interest - a modern VR gaming device – was no longer relevant.

Results and discussion

In addition to the lack of modern technology in universities, teachers are often reluctant to improve their methodology and integrate innovative tools into teaching. Thus, the use of technology in the Kazakhstan educational system comes down to mainly conventional computers and standard software platforms.

This situation is reminiscent of the first wave of information technology development, when early generations of computers were already in full swing in industry and entertainment, and the university continued to work exclusively with paper sources of information and outdated devices such as a film strip projector.

Such a technological gap provokes negative associations among students about the university, the educational process is initially perceived as something archaic and therefore boring [5].

A similar gap is observed today – in other areas, smart applications, virtual reality, cloud technologies and digital communications are actively used, while in university progress is limited to PCs and educational presentations.

Another problem associated with the lack of technological elements in teaching is the lack of personalization of lessons, which reduces the effectiveness of teaching. With regard to English, it was noticed that a student assimilates the material more effectively if the level of teaching corresponds to his personal level. The data were interpreted taking into account all the information collected by various research methods, with extrapolation to potential directions for the

development of the methodology [6]. The results of observations and analysis helped to assess the prospects for using the VR methodology in universities when learning foreign languages. Digital devices, software and virtual learning platforms allow you to create student profiles and tailor course content to their individual abilities and goals. This approach speeds up the student's progress. In the course of the questionnaire survey of teachers, in general, positive impressions of the new methodology were found. Teachers noted difficulties only at the initial stage, when it was necessary to learn and understand a new digital tool. However, it can be assumed that conservatively-minded teachers will perceive such methods with caution, without much desire to study them. An important fact is that modern IT tools allow users to use network databases, various search engines, library catalogs, etc., helping the teacher and his students to become familiar with the world's information resources [7]. As a result, educational activity both in the classroom and outside the classroom time reaches a fundamentally higher and more effective level.

Thus, another advantage of using VR in teaching writing is the fact that the learning process itself acquires greater dynamism. Students independently type and edit the texts of their messages and essays, learn to work effectively with text editors, improve their computer skills, and work with electronic versions of various dictionaries. Students get the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom and realize the practical significance of the acquired knowledge, which is actively promoted by correspondence with peers from other countries, sending their essays and creative works to the teacher, and taking part in various projects [8].

Conclusions

The VR methodology offers tremendous opportunities to improve various strategies for teaching English. In addition to practical opportunities, it significantly increases the motivation and involvement of students. This conclusion can be extrapolated to the virtual reality industry as a whole as a promising new vector for the development of digital devices as educational tools. VR technology helps to eliminate the psychological block of communication between students, moving them to an unusual interesting space for communication and allowing them to choose the role they like [9]. The student gains a vivid experience that increases interest in education. There are lots of great reasons why you should consider using educational software in your classroom. For instance, this software will enable your students to become more effective independent learners. Even severely disabled students can succeed herein because this software places everyone on the same level. Communication in the virtual space awakens imagination and removes psychological blocks. In fact, the students are side by side in the same class, but at the same time they see fabulous landscapes and try on various avatars. In such

an atmosphere, communication is more active and fun. Students willingly travel to other countries in virtual mode. Without coercion on the part of the teacher, they try to read signs, posters, go through standard role-playing situations in a virtual space. When the passage of an interactive quest or a language game became the common goal of a group of students, they were more willing to communicate when looking for solutions than during the implementation of the corresponding standard strategy [10].

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ESL СЫНЫПТАҒЫ ВИРТУАЛДЫ ШЫНДЫҚ (VR) ҚҰРАЛДАРЫНЫҢ АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ МЕН КЕМШІЛКТЕРІ

Бұл мақалада шет тілдерін оқыту саласындағы көптеген зерттеулер берілген, студенттердің жетістігі мен оқу жоспарын жекелеңдіру және оған қызығушылық деңгейі арасындағы тікелей байланысты көрсетеді. Бұған сабақтың сюжетін арттыратын құралдар – әңгімелеу, бейнероликтерді талқылау, суреттер мен жағдаяттар салынған карточкалар ықпал етеді. Бұл жұмыс барысында VR көмегімен ағылшын тілін оқытудың жаңа стратегиясын әзірлеу және тестілеу сипатталған. Бұл әдістеме оқу ақпаратын қабылдаудың бірнеше арналары арқылы бірден қабылдауға мүмкіндік береді, когнитивті синтезді ынталандырады және интегративті ми құрылымдарының оқу процесіне негүрлым толық қатысуын қамтамасыз етеді, бұл оқушының есте сақтау қабілетін арттырады. Геймификация элементтері және ойын технологиясын қолдану фактісінің өзі оқушылардың қызығушылығын оятып, арттырады. Сондай-ақ, виртуалды шындық технологиясын енгізу интерактивті экскурсиялар мен бүкіл әлем бойынша бейне мұрағаттарға қол жеткізуді қоса отырып, пайдаланылған мультимедиялық материалдардың арсеналын кеңейтуге мүмкіндік береді. Осы жұмыс барысында жинақталған тәжірибе смартфондар мен планшеттерге арналған қосымша мен үйлесімде студенттерге арналған толыққанды оқу бағдарламасын әзірлеуді бастауға мүмкіндік берді.

Кілтті сөздер: ағылшын тілі, оқыту, әдістеме, виртуалды шындық.

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ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА И НЕДОСТАТКИ ИНСТРУМЕНТОВ ВИРТУАЛЬНОЙ РЕАЛЬНОСТИ (VR) В КЛАССЕ ESL

В данной статье представлены многочисленные исследования в области преподавания иностранных языков, указывающие на прямую связь между успехами студентов и персонализацией учебной программы и уровнем интереса к ней. Этому способствуют инструменты, развивающие сюжет уроков – рассказы историй, обсуждение видео, использование карточек с картинками и ситуациями. В ходе этой работы описывается разработка и тестирование новой стратегии обучения английскому языку с использованием виртуальной реальности. Эта методика позволяет получать учебную информацию сразу по нескольким каналам восприятия, стимулируя когнитивный синтез и более полное участие интегративных структур мозга в процессе обучения, что увеличивает способность студента к запоминанию. Элементы геймификации и сам факт использования игровых технологий пробуждают и повышают интерес студентов. Также внедрение технологии виртуальной реальности дает возможность расширить арсенал используемых мультимедийных материалов, добавив интерактивные экскурсии и доступ к видеоархивам по всему миру. Опыт, полученный в ходе этой работы, позволил приступить к разработке полноценной учебной программы для студентов в сочетании с приложением для смартфонов и планшетов.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, обучение, методика, виртуальная реальность.

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