



## Virtual reality as a method of teaching Chinese

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### ABSTRACT

Modern innovative technologies play an important role in the educational process of higher educational institutions. To improve the Chinese language teaching system and improve the quality of teaching, it is necessary to introduce a variety of interactive teaching methods.

The article explores a relatively new technology in education - virtual reality. The possibility of using VR technology in Chinese language lessons to create real conditions for communication and language use is considered.

### Keywords:

Chinese language, interactive methods, technologies, virtual reality, competence, human activities, VR system.

Currently, teaching the Chinese language through classical pedagogical methods is a priority subject of numerous studies. Proceeding from the fact that in the 21st century pedagogy is being enriched with new organizational forms of conducting educational sessions, teachers and methodologists are tirelessly looking for new educational models for learning foreign languages. As noted earlier, at the present stage, multimedia and other innovative technologies are actively used in the education system. Among the numerous developments used in education, the technology of virtual reality (hereinafter referred to as VR) has recently gained recognition and popularity. Despite the poorly studied and still narrow application of VR, the author sees the prospects for the widespread dissemination of this innovation.

Virtual reality technology, VR (or VR - virtual reality) is a world (objects and subjects) created by technical means, transmitted to a person through his/her sensations: vision, hearing, smell, touch and others. Virtual reality simulates both exposure and responses to exposure [Karelov, 2000, p. 16].

There are a huge number of formulations for this technological term, and if

we generalize them, we can single out the following fundamental features of "virtual reality":

- believability - creating a user experience of the reality of what is happening;
- accessibility for study - technologies make it possible to study a large concretized world;
- interactivity - allows you to interact with the environment (classmates or teacher);
- creating the effect of presence - the process involves both the brain and the body of the user, stimulating almost all the senses.

The key tool for moving to the virtual world is a VR headset, or as it is also called VR glasses. The article will consider this particular type of device, since at the present stage it is the most popular and generally available on the market of innovative computer technologies. By donning glasses, the observer is transported to a whole other world, which was designed to provide visual and tactile stimuli for the user. This contributes to a more adequate retention of knowledge.

Thus, we can conclude that the goal of any VR system is to fully immerse the user in a new simulation environment. The way virtual reality works is a very clever combination of various computer technologies that interact to

create an immersive personal experience [Dobrova, Labzina, 2010, p.19]. Such an experience arises as a result of the effect of presence, that is, both the brain and the body of the user are involved in the process, stimulating almost all the senses.

Advantages and disadvantages of VR in teaching a foreign language (on the example of Chinese)

Learning the Chinese language using virtual reality technology is a completely new and, in the author's opinion, an extremely effective method of mastering a language with a complex conceptual and speech apparatus. However, like any innovative invention in the field of education, virtual reality has its supporters and opponents. What are the advantages of VR over classical methods of studying Chinese in college?

First, virtual reality creates interest for students. Students will always gravitate towards observing or experiencing something with their own eyes instead of dryly reading or listening to lectures on the subject. The prospect of such training can develop a student's interest in the Chinese language and the original Chinese culture, since such a visual and playful method will minimize the difficulties in learning.

Secondly, virtual reality increases the level of student participation in the educational process. Creating productive interactions with classrooms has always been a challenge for teachers. With the help of virtual reality, this aspect will become easier to control. For example, building a dialogue with a teacher based on a discussion of the student's independent experience in the virtual world, doing more interesting homework, acting out joint dialogue-scenes in a spoken language lesson, and so on.

Thirdly, within the educational process, VR makes it possible to organize intercultural communication with native speakers. To do this, you just need to put on a VR helmet and immerse yourself in a special program. When studying Chinese, we should not forget about the importance of moving from the zone of comfortable communication with the teacher to the zone of communication with native

speakers. With repeated use of the same grammatical and lexical structures, they are internalized. Let us clarify that internalization (from Latin *interims* - internal), in our understanding, is a term denoting the process of mastering by an individual or a group of people social values, norms, attitudes, stereotypes that belong to the sphere of interaction with the world of another culture.

And finally, the fourth and most important advantage of virtual reality is the ability to fully immerse yourself in the environment of the target language. Study abroad is not publicly available, and classroom learning cannot provide a real-life communication experience, no matter how thoughtful the curriculum is. A way out of this situation will be the use of virtual reality programs in classrooms and at home, where each student will be able to gain unlimited communication skills and apply them in practice in conversation with native speakers, for example: job interviews in China, ordering food in a restaurant, buying tickets and so on.

Of course, virtual reality technology is far from perfect. If we consider a Chinese lesson with the use of VR technologies, then it is also necessary to take into account a number of shortcomings and nuances. According to the author, the main disadvantage is that students with a zero level of knowledge will not be able to study in this format. You must have basic knowledge of Chinese grammar, hieroglyphics and phonetics in order to understand graphic symbols and be able to recognize complex sound combinations by ear.

Another disadvantage is the lack of flexibility. If in class you can be spontaneous, ask questions, get answers, then using a VR headset is a different experience. If you are using special software that is still programmed for a specific job, you will not be able to do anything other than what you should do within the program.

This lack of flexibility can be a disadvantage for most students and teachers, because education is not a fixed, robotic activity.

Another potential disadvantage can be the transformation of interpersonal ties and

communication. Traditional education is based on personal human communication. Virtual reality is completely different - it's you and the software and nothing else. This can damage the relationship between students and teachers, and can also lead to unwillingness to communicate with real people when entering the country of the target language.

Thus, we can conclude that although virtual reality is still in the process of practical development and further conceptual development, nevertheless, we see that, despite a number of disadvantages, it can provide huge opportunities for teaching Chinese in the classroom and at home.

#### *Virtual reality as a method of teaching Chinese*

Although it is possible to start implementing the virtual learning technology at different stages of study at the university, but, according to the author, the main audience of the newest technologies under consideration will be students starting from the second year of study. By this time, the main lexicogrammatical base has already been laid, on which it is necessary to fully develop and practice speech skills.

One of the toughest challenges in teaching Chinese is finding effective ways to help students improve their speaking skills. The ultimate goal of teaching oral speech is to build communicative competence. One of the possible ways to solve the problem of effective communication is the active use of virtual reality technologies in the lessons of the Chinese spoken language.

With virtual reality, students can fully immerse themselves in a variety of realistic environments and learn the language from their own experience. Only after experiencing a particular situation from real life, a student can form an appropriate model of behavior. Only by immersing him/herself in a real authentic situation from the life of China, the student will be able to understand how to behave and what to do in order not to get into a difficult situation.

An example of immersion in the authentic atmosphere of China to practice speaking skills is the following lesson model.

First you need to choose a topic. Let's take - "buying tickets at the railway station." Before the lesson, the teacher explains words and phrases that might be useful for this lesson. Wearing virtual reality helmets, students are immersed in the noisy atmosphere of a Chinese train station, where a huge number of Chinese are queuing up, and all the inscriptions around are only in Chinese.

The next stage of this test is a conversation with a cashier. The dialogue is built on a question-and-answer basis. The program offers a set of standard questions for which there are options for answers. Thus, a conversation takes place, as a result of which a student has a specific visual-speech experience. In the future, when buying tickets in China itself, the student will have no fear of a noisy crowd or a cashier's speech. What is important, depending on the level of training of the student, the cashier's speech can be faster or slower.

With the help of VR, one can also deal with such an important aspect of the language as linguistic and regional studies. The teacher, together with the students, will have the opportunity to touch the history of China, travel to its important historical sites and attractions, for example, personally see the Great Wall of China and climb it, take a walk in Tiananmen Square, wander around the Beijing hutongs, take a photo from the Bund in Shanghai and many many others.

Based on the above, we can conclude that virtual reality cannot completely replace or replenish the experience of communicating with native speakers, it cannot immerse the student in a 100% real visual environment, with the atmosphere of communication with living people, it cannot transfer the physical shell to another space. What virtual reality can do is create invaluable experiences that help students better understand places, people, language, and processes in the country of interest. Also, thanks to virtual reality technologies, game learning takes on more and more diverse forms, in which the degree of immersion in the virtual world is quite high. This allows you to transfer a large amount of

information to potential users and develop certain skills in them.

The technologies of virtual worlds in the future may become one of the best options for a learning environment, as they allow reproducing on the screen of a special helmet almost all significant types of human activities

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