

APPLICATION OF INTERACTIVE GAMES AND SIMULATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the study of the role of interactive games and simulations in the process of teaching foreign languages. The article examines the educational benefits of interactive games and simulations, in particular, the possibilities of increasing motivation, developing language skills, forming intercultural communication skills, and gaining practical experience. The article also provides practical recommendations for teachers, discusses ways to effectively integrate interactive games and simulations into the lesson process, and discusses potential problems of this approach and their solutions.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, interactive games, simulations, motivation, language skills, intercultural communication, practical experience, educational advantages, integration, methodological recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, learning foreign languages is not only important, but also necessary. As globalization processes deepen and international relations expand, knowledge of foreign languages is an important factor for personal development, professional activity, and the economic growth of society. Therefore, improving the quality of foreign language education and awakening students' interest in the language is one of the pressing issues. Traditional teaching methods do not always lead to high results. Often students lose interest in learning a foreign language due to boring lessons, difficult grammatical rules, and practice-less exercises. Therefore, foreign language teachers are forced to search for new methods and means to make the learning process more interesting, dynamic, and motivational. Interactive games and simulations create an excellent opportunity to solve this problem in foreign language education. Games provide students with the opportunity to learn the language in a safe and interesting environment, encouraging them to experiment and develop their skills without fear of making mistakes. Simulations prepare students for real-life situations, enhance their intercultural communication skills, and create opportunities for gaining practical experience. From this point of view, the purpose of this article is to study the role of interactive games and simulations in teaching foreign languages, to analyze the advantages of their use, and to provide practical recommendations for teachers.

1. The concept of interactive games and simulations

Interactive games and simulations are pedagogical technologies used to make the learning process more interesting and effective, helping students actively participate, apply their knowledge in practice, and develop problem-solving skills. Their main difference is that games often have a game environment and rules, while simulations simulate real-life situations. However, both are based on interactive student engagement and immediate feedback.

Interactive games:

Interactive games are educational materials based on the active participation of students and game mechanisms. They make the learning process interesting and engaging, encouraging students to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills [1, 81]. Features:

Interactivity: During the game, students' choices and actions influence the outcome of the game.

Game mechanisms: The point system, levels, rewards, competition, and other game elements encourage and motivate students.

Instant feedback: Students can immediately see the results of their actions, which allows them to correct their mistakes and reinforce their knowledge.

Different formats: Interactive games can be in various formats, such as computer games, mobile applications, board games, etc.

Simulations are interactive learning tools that simulate real-life situations. They allow students to study various situations, make decisions, and test their skills in a safe environment. Features:

Real-life similarity: Simulations model real-life situations as accurately as possible.

Safe environment: Students have the opportunity to make mistakes in a safe environment and learn from them.

Decision-making: Simulations develop students' skills in decision-making and evaluating their consequences.

Multi-variance: Many simulations offer different scenarios and outcomes, allowing learners to explore different strategies and approaches [2, 213].

Both interactive games and simulations provide active student participation, instant feedback, and make the learning process interesting and memorable. They allow individualizing the learning process and adapting students to different learning styles. When used effectively, interactive games and simulations help students understand their knowledge more deeply and apply it in practice.

2. Advantages of interactive games and simulations

Interactive games and simulations have many advantages and are used in various fields. Their main advantages are:

Education and training:

Practical experience: Provides the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Making mistakes and seeing their consequences is possible in a safe environment.

Motivation and engagement: Thanks to the game element, the learning process becomes interesting and engaging, therefore student motivation increases.

Individual approach: Can be adapted to each student's specific needs. The difficulty and speed of the game can be adjusted depending on the student's level.

Quick Thinking and Problem-Solving: Games help develop skills in making quick decisions and problem-solving in non-standard situations [3, 210].

Teaching additional knowledge and skills: For example, through historical simulations, you can gain a deeper understanding of history, or through medical simulations, you can learn medical procedures.

Training and advanced training:

Safe environment: Hazardous situations can be taught safely by simulating them, such as flight simulations or surgical simulations.

Repetition exercises: Skills can be reinforced and automated by repeating the same situations.

Making important decisions: Teaching how to make the right decisions in difficult situations.

Increasing Efficiency: Increasing work efficiency by improving skills.

Other benefits:

Developing creativity: Some games help you think creatively and solve problems with new solutions.

Teamwork: Multi-player games help develop teamwork, collaboration, and communication skills.

Spending free time effectively: Games help to relax and reduce stress.

Socialization: There is an opportunity to meet and communicate with new people through online games [4, 884].

It should be noted that the effectiveness of interactive games and simulations depends on the quality of the game and its goals. Well-designed and thoughtful games can bring great benefits, otherwise they can be ineffective.

3. Methods of integrating interactive games and simulations into the lesson process

The following methods can be used for the effective integration of interactive games and simulations into the learning process:

1. Adaptation to the lesson objectives:

Linking the game/simulation to learning objectives: The game/simulation should align with the curriculum and learning outcomes. It should reinforce the topic being studied, help to understand concepts more deeply, or contribute to the development of new skills.

Clearly defining learning outcomes: At the end of the game/simulation, what students need to achieve should be clearly defined. These results are applied in the evaluation process.

2. Methods of inclusion in the educational process:

As an introduction: Use a short game or simulation to increase interest and activate prior knowledge before entering the topic.

Explanation and reinforcement: After explaining the concepts, use an interactive game or simulation to reinforce them.

As a practical exercise: Perform a game/simulation task to apply the acquired knowledge in practice and develop skills.

As independent work: Using a game/simulation for students to learn independently.

As group work: Playing in groups or performing simulation work to develop teamwork skills.

As a means of assessment: Use of games/simulation to assess students' knowledge and skills.

3. Game/simulation selection:

Suitability for students' age and knowledge: The game/simulation should be tailored to the students' age and knowledge.

Clarity of game mechanics: The rules and mechanics of the game/simulation should be understandable to students.

Technical capabilities: The technical capabilities necessary for conducting the game/simulation must be available.

Available resources: Resources necessary for the preparation and execution of the game/simulation must be available.

4. Support and evaluation:

Helping students: Helping students when needed during the game/simulation.

Analysis of game/simulation results: Improving the learning process by analyzing game/simulation results.

Taking into account student feedback: Taking into account student feedback on the game/simulation.

Example: When studying the Middle Ages in a history lesson, students can be involved in a simulation that involves building a castle or managing trade routes. In biology lessons, one can use interactive simulation that shows the internal functioning of the cell [5, 18].

Importantly, interactive games and simulations should be part of the learning process, not the learning process itself. They are tools that help achieve learning objectives.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of interactive games and simulations in teaching foreign languages makes the learning process more interesting, effective, and useful for students. As noted in the article, games and simulations increase students' motivation, develop language skills, form intercultural communication skills, and create opportunities for gaining practical experience. When choosing interactive games and simulations, teachers should pay attention to such factors as compliance with didactic goals, taking

into account the age characteristics of students, assessing technical capabilities, and creating a comfortable environment in the classroom. Teachers should also explain the rules of the game to students, help them during the game, and hold discussions after the game. Further research should be aimed at studying the influence of interactive games and simulations on the language skills of students of different ages and levels, creating new and innovative games and simulations, and developing methods for their effective integration into the educational process. This, in turn, serves to improve the quality of foreign language education and ensure the competitiveness of our country in the international arena.

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