

A Critical Analysis of Virtual Reality (VR) on Developing Business Communication Skills

By

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Abstract

English is considered as one of the significant global business dialects. Different innovations have come up to further develop the language learning process around here. The whole scholastic world and the business world are decidedly moving toward the innovative obstruction in business relational abilities. The new ordinary circumstance is giving numerous chances to get familiar with the language, particularly English for non-local speakers, through one of the vivid platforms, which is Virtual Reality. In request to stay cutthroat in business world, endeavoring people need to ad lib familiarity and capability. Students, in this situation, can profit from thinking about business explicit English. The paper dissects how Virtual reality (VR) empowers the students practice business related situations through common sense methodology. It likewise manages such circumstances where the students can exploit their profession potential. A review directed utilizing blended approach demonstrates how the augmented experience apparatuses are appropriate to further develop relational abilities in English. It clarifies how different applications connected with VR can make the interest and energy in learners' mind and different apparatuses utilized for upgrading Business English.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Business English. Language learning, techniques, Vocabulary Enhancement

Introduction

English is considered as one of the prominent languages of international business. In order to survive the cut-throat competition in various business environments, individuals need to boost up

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their fluency in English. Great command over English language is one of the essential factors to get employment opportunities. Most of the international organizations and multi-national companies are looking for the individuals who can have the best knowledge of English. The same goes with various fields in the market like, travel guide, advertisement designer, media manager, etc. Theoretically, informed educators would use teaching machines to develop their students' ability to repeat transmitted information, but not the ability to act creatively in new situations (Piaget, 1970). Learning second language and acquiring fluency is not an easy task unless the learner needs to masters all the four skills. Lack of vocabulary and hesitation to speak in a given situation, is one of the major challenges faced by the non-native speakers of English. The endless vocabulary in English and their myriad synonyms makes it difficult for the learners to master the language. 'Vocabulary' as the words of a languages which include single items, phrases, and chunks of a few words that are able to convey a meaning just like individual words (Lessard-Clouston, M, 2013).

Virtual Reality

Virtual reality (VR) is a technology, which immerses the learner in a desired replicated world. It is a three-dimensional computer-generated environment, which can be interacted by the user. Using this technology, the learner can easily place himself/herself digitally, in any location, in an imaginary situation. The important feature of VR is that it is interactive. This is a drifting technology, which gives major scope to varied businesses to take a leap and simulate physical presence in the real world as well as the imaginary world. Video games are one of the interesting ways to learn a language. They a pivotal role in language acquisition and are the best examples for virtual reality. They have stepped into the recent realms beyond the present technology. Benefits of the VR technology are accessible to common man of the society. Various applications of virtual reality are gaining popularity among ELT practitioners and researchers (Hawkinson, Mehran, & Alizadeh, 2017).

Artificial environments with software are created with the help of Virtual Reality. Vision and sound are the two major senses which can be utilized in this technology. It is one of the best technologies to enhance student learning and engagement. VR education is different from the normal education because the current era of education relies on digital devices. It works on the premise of creating a virtual world, either real or imagined and allows the learners to interact with the world in the way they want. Immersion of the learners in their area of interest area motivates them to understand the topic fully, which also requires less cognitive load to process the information. 'I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn' (Albert Einstein). Another benefit of having VR in education is its ability to help broaden students' exposure to careers. It also improves learners' ability to explore themselves to a field of work or to their job. VR has gained momentum in this new normal situation. It has also occupied various industries introducing diverse ways of media marketing.

Role of Virtual Reality in improving Business English

VR can immerse the learner in a wide array of realistic business situations, in which the students can practice the skills like, team management, making a keynote speech at a conference etc. It also creates a comfortable way to the learner by recreating the real business situation. The visual immersion as well as 360 surround audio tricks makes the learner immerse into the virtual world as real and makes them feel comfortable. For example, if a student/learner would like to visit the other countries on a business purpose, where English is considered as primary language, the learner can utilize these techniques and practice in his best way using

VR technology. 'The visual immersion, as well as 360 surround audio, tricks the user into believing the virtual world is real. Instead of spending hundreds of dollars travelling and living in an English speaking country to improve your skills, you'll be able to practice the same situations within VR from anywhere in the world.' (<https://virtualspeech.com/blog/improve-business-english-vr>).

Using this technology, especially in business area, the learner can practice the situations by understanding the role and participate in meetings with more confidence. It also helps him/her to acquire communication skills and analyze language and culture. Voice analysis technology can also provide the learners with the inputs related to pace and pitch of the tone. These methods work effectively compare to the conventional method of practicing in front of the mirror. The first theory aligning with VR integration into education is constructivist learning. In contrast to older learning theories such as behaviorism, constructivism considers learning as an active, contextualized process of knowledge construction and encourages learners to construct their own understandings and to validate them through social negotiation (Ertmer & Newby, 1993). The learner need not hesitate to speak and learn.

"Feeding our senses, a stimulus that is so similar to what we see in reality, that we interpret it as reality. In all other mediums your consciousness is interpreting a medium. But in VR there is no gap. The learners aren't internalizing it. Learner is internal in it. It is a quantum leap in mediums because the medium is disappearing." Said by Chris Milk, founder of VRSE, which is the best IOS device that shows the best videos designed using Virtual Reality.

Speaking skills practice for business environment using VR

'Public Speaking VR' is an app which helps the learner to practice for public speaking by inculcating photo-realistic situations to train them. The learner can find similar environment and the audience; sound distractions can be identified while speaking. The learner needs to present a topic and upload the presentation in the app. Pitch and intonation in the voice can also be analyzed and the feedback is sent to the learners so that they can improve. Through this app the learners can give as many as tests as required, until gain perfection in it. These situations help the learners to give their best presentation while explaining their product details. The instant feedback which you get through this particular app can hone the speaking skills of the students at a faster pace. Many other apps like 'Ummo', 'Like so', 'Speak app', 'Samsung Befearless' etc. which functions have been developed using VR technology.

Hiring the employees through interview is one of the major aspects in business. During this pandemic situation most of the companies are conducting interviews of the candidates using VR as a major medium. In this process the Candidate is given a link, which he/she uses to login to the interview. Using the new applications of VR, the process of conducting an interview is has become much easier. A Virtual conference room is created for the interviewee, where the interviewer can ask questions, and get response and also observes interviewee's body language. Most of the major organizations are implementing this technology and creating space to the learners to participate in various interviews and discussions.

E-Commerce is one of the fields in which companies are gaining more business benefits of virtual reality. VR creates a complete new way in professional business too. Trainers in this area are using this technology in an extensive way. Diverse nature of VR allows the learner to look around in the room and allows him/her to interact with the people who are available on online. The learner can adapt to the situation more easily and in shorter duration of time. Learners can visualize the project in a better manner, which is one of the important aspects in business environment. VR allows the learner to visualize the structures clearly as they design; without wasting time and money. So,

Virtual Reality is a boon to architects, engineers and the learners who are in architectural planning. Virtual tours of various locations would be possible through this technology. It is considered as one of the major aspect in business field, which is beneficial to the people who are in real estate industry. The builder can provide the virtual tour of the property to their clients and can help them to visualize the area or the plan of their house whereby they can take a better decision without wasting time.

‘VR Scenario’ is the app which can make the learner ready for impromptu speaking. Through this app the learner can enhance quick thinking skills by using about various business related presentation slides. The slide changes for every thirty seconds. The learner needs to visualize the slide and speak accordingly. His/her English speaking skills are tested during the speech, and s immediate feedback is provided so that the learner can understand the mistake and can practice well to attain perfection. Considering all these benefits a sample study has been conducted for group of hundred students.

Aim of the study

Present study focuses on improving business communication skills, especially, in the area of speaking for the final year students of BBA, Siddhartha College, Tuni.

Hypothesis

1. Business communication skills are taught in most of the colleges, but are confined to classrooms.
2. Innovative and trending technologies are not used to enhance Business English skills to achieve the desired learning outcome.

Objectives of the study

1. To enhance business communication skills especially, in speaking, using one of the innovative and trending strategies in technology.
2. To make use of Virtual Reality to obtain the required learning outcome.

Research Design

Students were divided into two equal groups, Group A and Group B, consisted of fifty students. These two groups were given one week training program on ‘improving business communication skills with a special focus on speaking’. Group A students were trained on oral discussions without using VR as a part of training, whereas Group B was trained on using different VR technologies in various topics like oral presentations, impromptu and group discussions. After five weeks of continuous training using VR methods, the data collection and the perceptions in students’ mind were analyzed and interpreted.

During their training period students were provided various situations like, conversations with other employees, leading a meeting, business networking, answering interview questions, giving a presentation, key note speech, impromptu speeches and giving feedback to peer group, etc. A test was conducted in the last week of the training and students were asked to give feedback on the. Group A students were able to show 30% of perfection in the assigned task, whereas Group B were able to show 60% of perfection, with confidence in their speaking. The feedback showed that 70% of the students found the course to be satisfactory and useful. They could gain more confidence

and accurate communication skills with the activities designed through Virtual Reality apps. Hence the hypothesis is not a null hypothesis.

The present Study VR is expected to be one of the important technologies in the coming future. Gaming industry is already one of the popular domains which uses VR, the technology is not just limited to this industry. Some of the business educational institutions have already implemented VR and the number will certainly increase in future benefiting most of the students.

Conclusion

The present study proved that learning business communication skills are conducive by using Virtual Reality in learning and teaching of English. The study is an investigation at various possible pedagogical apps/tools to improve communication skills in various business contexts. Future studies can explore the research on this particular area. For example, research would involve more participants of diverse English language proficiency levels and education to examine to meet the preference of Virtual Reality design in more and more contexts, which would also investigate the factors, influence the collaborative in various activities.

As a conclusion it is beneficial if Virtual Reality can become a certain tool in education. Mostly young graduate trainers can find these tools are beneficiary, because of its motivational aspects and being dependent on their smart phones. Adoption of VR tools in business communication skills can provide the best options to the learners in improving their communication skills.

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