

Интернационализация образования. Образование в странах мира Internationalization of education. Education around the world

Original article
DOI: 10.14529/ped230108

IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY IN FOREIGN STUDENTS' LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. In the context of globalization, many Russian universities are interested in attracting foreign students to receive higher education, however, for successful studying, foreign students need to integrate into education process, as well as into the socio-cultural life of the country. The contradictions that arise between the requirements of modern society for the effective integration of foreign students into the educational process and the insufficient development of the methodology for teaching a foreign language to foreign students lead to the need to develop a new learning technology. The purpose of the research is to analyze the use of edutainment technology means in teaching English for groups of foreign students of South Ural State University. The authors analyzed the concept of “edutainment technology”; revealed the awareness of foreign students about the types of means of edutainment technology in the education process of the university; analyzed the effectiveness of the use of edutainment technology in foreign language teaching. The educators' attitude to the use of edutainment technology as a means of language training was revealed. The edutainment technology was introduced into the process of teaching English to foreign students, based on the analysis of educators' answers. To perform the tasks the theoretical (analysis of existing research) and empirical (questionnaires, interviews, Cronbach's alpha method of mathematical data processing) methods were applied. The results of the study showed that most of the students were not aware of some of the means of edutainment technology and their application possibilities. Educators were not aware of many of the edutainment technology means. The main difficulties the educators faced were: lack of time to master this technology, lack of knowledge of new tools. These results will help educators and specialists in the field of language training in teaching English to foreign students using edutainment.

Keywords: edutainment, foreign students' training, language training, university, education process, learning management system (LMS), edutainment sites, mobile applications.

For citation: Kuzmina N.N., Kochkina D.V., Korotkova E.G., Kuzmina N.M. Implementation of edutainment technology in foreign students' language teaching. *Bulletin of the South Ural State University. Ser. Education. Educational Sciences.* 2023;15(1):82–96. DOI: 10.14529/ped230108

Научная статья
УДК 378.018
DOI: 10.14529/ped230108

ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ «ЭДЬЮТЕЙНМЕНТ» ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ СТУДЕНТОВ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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Аннотация. В условиях глобализации многие российские вузы заинтересованы в привлечении иностранных студентов для получения высшего образования, однако для успешного обучения иностранным студентам необходимо быстро интегрироваться в образовательный процесс, а также в социо-культурную жизнь страны. Противоречия, возникающие между требованиями современного общества к быстрой интеграции иностранных студентов в образовательный процесс и недостаточной разработанностью методики преподавания иностранного языка иностранным студентам, приводят к необходимости разработки новой технологии обучения. Цель исследования – анализ использования средств технологии «эдютейнмент» на примере занятий по английскому языку для иностранных студентов Южно-Уральского государственного университета. Поставлены и решены следующие задачи: проанализировано понятие «эдютейнмент-технология»; выявлена осведомленность иностранных студентов о видах средств «эдютейнмент-технологии» в образовательном процессе университета; проанализирована эффективность использования средств «эдютейнмент-технологии» при обучении иностранному языку; выявлено отношение преподавателей к использованию средств «эдютейнмент-технологии» и их применению в качестве средства языковой подготовки; на основе анализа ответов преподавателей разработана и внедрена «эдютейнмент-технология» в процесс обучения иностранных студентов английскому языку. В ходе исследования применены теоретические (анализ современной научно-методической литературы) и эмпирические (анкетирование, интервью, альфа-метод Кронбаха математической обработки полученных данных) методы. Результаты исследования показали, что большая часть студентов ранее не знала о некоторых средствах «эдютейнмент-технологии» и возможностях применения. Преподаватели не всегда применяют и не знают многие средства «эдютейнмент-технологии». Основные трудности, с которыми они сталкиваются: нет достаточного времени для освоения данной технологии, нет осведомленности о новых средствах. Результаты статьи помогут преподавателям и специалистам в области языковой подготовки при обучении иностранных студентов английскому языку с помощью технологии «эдютейнмент».

Ключевые слова: эдютейнмент, обучение иностранных студентов, языковая подготовка, университет, образовательный процесс, система управления обучением (LMS), образовательно-развлекательные сайты, мобильные приложения

Для цитирования: Implementation of edutainment technology in foreign students' language teaching / N.N. Kuzmina, D.V. Kochkina, E.G. Korotkova, N.M. Kuzmina // Вестник ЮУрГУ. Серия «Образование. Педагогические науки». 2023. Т. 15, № 1. С. 82–96. DOI: 10.14529/ped230108

Introduction

More and more applicants wish to study abroad, as international educational connections are widely increasing in the modern world. According to such a situation, the Russian Federation is also concerned with that matter, it needs to attract international students. As it is stated in the national project “Education”, subproject “Export of education”, Russian education competitiveness should be increased on the international

market and consequently improve quality of education [22]. The priority project application goal is to improve international students' conditions and their level of education in the country. Thus, the recognition of Russian education on the international educational market will be achieved.

International students' training will be sound and successful, their communication skills will be developed, if international students' integration into the socio-cultural life of the host country

and to the educational process of higher institutions of Russia goes smoothly and fast. It largely depends on the educators' effective ways of educational interaction organization. There is insufficient development of the methodology for teaching a foreign language to foreign students that lead to the need to develop a new learning technology.

Educators should not only teach, but entertain and via edutainment technology develop international students' communication skills so that it will bring them to better and quick academic integration.

For some researchers edutainment is "an effective balance between information, multimedia products, psychological techniques and modern technologies" [10]. The educational university process is always considered to be a communicative interaction process between a professor and students where modern technologies are combined with individual approach, creativity and raising students' interest.

South Ural State University (SUSU), one of 21 participants of Project 5-100 and now "Priority 2030", put the main goal of training a new leaders' generation who will be able to face global challenges and improve the world [27].

For making smart educational environment at university it is supposed to apply digitalization of education, personalization of teaching methods, and creation of such technologies that will lead to achieve the aim.

In this connection, the use of edutainment technology will be more appropriate as it is a modern pedagogical innovation based on visual material, narration, modern psychological techniques, game format, information and communication technologies, the purpose of which is to facilitate the analysis of events as much as possible, maintain an emotional connection, attract and hold students' interest and attention for a long time. To reach this aim, professors of SUSU organize a production of modern teaching aids as distance learning (e-learning and b-learning), also distance courses in the MOOC format.

However, the reality shows that not all educators and students realize the importance of applying edutainment technology into teaching and learning processes. The reasons vary from negativism to digital tools in education, not awareness about this technology, low level of computer literacy, problems connected with devoting much time and effort to develop, apply and support

online courses, to no wish how to use edutainment sites, mobile applications etc.

We consider the research aim to be the analysis of the use of the edutainment technology means and introduction of their main types in the educational process on the example of English classes for foreign students of South Ural State University. We set several tasks in our research:

1) to identify what edutainment technology is (literature analysis);

2) to reveal the awareness of foreign students about the types of means of edutainment technology in the educational process of the university (a questionnaire, interview among 49 foreign students). It is necessary to find out what students know to define the most interesting types to satisfy the needs of the students and to enhance their better academic integration;

3) to analyze the frequency and effectiveness of edutainment technology in teaching a foreign language, a questionnaire, interview (among 24 English language lecturers) are implemented;

4) to gain educators' interests and difficulties in relation to the use of edutainment technology as a means of language training, the educators' needs analysis (among lecturers of English from South Ural State University) is used;

5) based on the results analysis and educators' answers, the edutainment technology is introduced into the process of teaching English including edutainment sites (Kahoot, Quizlet), mobile applications (Google Expedition, Arts and Culture), online course "General English Course" via Moodle.

To start the research, it is necessary to give theoretical assessment and present literature review.

Literature Review

The problem of enhancing international students' communication skills for better academic integration can be revealed through the competence-based approach, as new technologies development of training a competent expert, who is able to effectively solve practical problems which requires foreign-language communication abilities, is an essential goal of the higher education within this approach.

I.A. Zimnyay determines three stages in formation of competence-based approach: its introduction into scientific research, usage of the competence category in the theory and practice of teaching language and communication and

finally, observing competence as an educational outcome [33]. At present we may speak about the fourth stage in formation of competence-based approach in education, which consists of applying new technologies which ensure the desired competencies on the basis of delivering free access to information resources and training through various kinds of formal and informal contacts [14].

In the pedagogical literature we may encounter technology classifications made by V.G. Gulchevskoy, V.T. Fomenko, T.M. Davydenko, T.I. Shamova which are based on problem-based learning, gaming technology, communication, creative, computer technologies etc. Students got used to obtain knowledge and be entertained at the same time. As a result, edutainment learning technology, which is based on the concept "education and entertainment", appeared. Edutainment technology has been used as a term for modern technology of education. Z. Okan and Z. Kazanchi quoted D. Buckingham and M. Scanlon who consider edutainment to be a hybrid genre based on visual material in a tale or game format and more informal, less related to the didactic style [5]. Z. Okan defines the goal of edutainment as balancing a computer screen users' emotions when they see colorful graphics and design, he also name it interactive pedagogy to convince users that learning is interesting, informative and entertaining process [26]. D. Buckingham and M. Scanlon consider edutainment as a combination of traditional content and teaching methods in the context of new technologies. This technology is useful on many levels as it possesses creative approaches to teaching students, and they can see the practical results of their study [5].

M. Resnick proves that entertainment technology is used as awards for "suffering of getting education" [28]. According to Esta de Fossard, edutainment technology in pedagogics and methodology possesses the following characteristics as validity (students see usefulness of knowledge), extra training (students can gain knowledge by themselves), distributed learning (network training distribution), free access to educational resources in different ways at any time [9].

Entertainment technology influenced on education through such forms as radio plays, "soap operas", special telecast was the research subject in the works of L. Li; W. Zhang [19, 32]. Jiří Němec and Josef Trna define edutainment as

a new technology focusing on a methodical understanding of gaming technology which focus is fun and happiness [23]. In the edutainment technology according to S. V. Kuvshinov learning process is an event together with active participation of students, a kind of "action" where all are involved [17].

Among the means of edutainment technology, one can single out the following: master classes on various topics: for example, "culinary linguistics", in which students cook various dishes and speak only English; game libraries in English using desktop, computer, video games; conducting lessons-excursions to the museum, zoo, gallery, office, shopping center etc., in English, where students receive cognitive information training in a relaxed atmosphere; organization of quizzes, olympiads of various format in English; crafting and workshops with the manufacture of various crafts; web quests, video blogging and animation films; teaching English through dramatization and theater; speating (from English speaking and eating - a type of educational leisure, when for students meetings are organized in a cafe or restaurant in the language being studied; lectures, discussions, round tables on various topics; production of books, magazines, comics and other copyright products in English [4, 10, 13].

According to the analysis of scientific literature, edutainment technology has a number of methodological advantages and it can be an effective tool for the development of international students' foreign language communicative competence. It is a modern pedagogical innovation based on visual material, narration, modern psychological techniques, game format, information and communication technologies, the purpose of which is to facilitate the analysis of events as much as possible, maintain an emotional connection with the object of study, attract and hold the attention of students for a long time in a relaxed atmosphere. We came to the conclusion that we should use edutainment technology means that let educators and students learn a foreign language in a motivated and interactive educational environment.

Based on the theoretical analysis results, we propose to apply edutainment technology into the process of English teaching including edutainment sites (Kahoot, Quizlet), mobile applications (Google Expedition, Arts and Culture), online course "General English Course" via Moodle designed for the research (task 1).

Materials and Methods

In the course of the study, theoretical (analysis of modern scientific and methodological literature) and empirical (questionnaires, interviews, Cronbach's alpha method of mathematical processing of the data obtained) methods were applied.

Participants. The current research adopted an inhomogeneous sampling to select the candidates among the international students of different citizenship, culture, sex, age, year of study and institutes (higher schools) at South Ural State University. The sample size was 49 students, 20 female and 29 male, who completed the online questionnaire. The students were from Botswana, China, Haiti, Egypt, Tadzhiistan, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Livan, Zimbabwe. In this study also 24 English language lecturers who taught the course of Practical English at South Ural State University participated. Both lecturers and students took part in the survey in the 1st semester of the academic year 2021–2022 where students were sent the online form of the questionnaire and the ESL lecturers were sent the online form and interviewed face-to-face at the same time.

Instruments. When conducting the study, the triangulation method was applied which is defined by Flick (2009) as “the combination of different methods, study groups, local and temporal settings, and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomenon” [2]. By combining a questionnaire and an interview, the results were checked to increase the credibility and validity of the data.

Google Forms, a web-based app for data collection purposes was chosen as a free online tool, that allows you to collect information easily and efficiently. An online questionnaire for international students with a total of 10 items consisting of two parts: 5 questions based on personal background data (age, citizenship, institute/higher school, sex and the year of studies) and 5 questions dealing with edutainment technology was employed to gauge the perceptions of bachelor international students. The items of the questionnaire for educators were created by the researchers to meet the aims of the study, get the information about English lecturers' awareness about edutainment technology for teaching a foreign language and their experience and issues in using the edutainment technology in class. The responses were based on single select and

multi select multiple choice questions and Yes/No questions [3]. The anonymity and confidentiality of the given data were guaranteed for both educators and students. The quantitative data obtained from the respondents were computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Before conducting the analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha value was obtained to measure internal consistency.

Research procedure. The initial part of our research was conducted by means of *Qualitative Pretest Interview (QPI)*. To identify the problematic questions for calculating and assessing them qualitatively further on in questionnaires, a pretest-procedure was used – an interview with both students and educators regarding the types of edutainment technology that they know and that are implemented for learning/teaching foreign languages [6].

In the next part of the study most popular answers from the pretest interview were included into the questionnaires with closed-ended questions for both international students and educators. Since it was not easy to collect answers from students by email, the volunteers from the Association of International Students and Alumni assisted in this by personal request of international students and explanation of the importance of taking part in the survey. As the international students of South Ural State university study in Russian and in English, the items of the student questionnaire were in these two languages. After collecting all of the data from teachers and students, it was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet to start the data analysis process for consistency and reliability.

Results and discussion

The current research was focused on the assessment of using edutainment technology at a university educational process. In the course of collecting the survey data the students and educators were to answer a set of questions. The responses of both students and educators were tested from the point of their reliability. The data in Tables 1, 2 show that the questionnaires have an acceptable degree of stability and can be relied upon in the study field.

Table 1

Reliability statistics
for educators' questionnaire

Chronbach's Alpha	№ of Items
0,802	24

Reliability statistics
for students' questionnaire

Table 2

Chronbach's Alpha	№ of Items
0,9746	49

To reveal the awareness of foreign students about the types of means of edutainment technology in the educational process of the university (task 2), we asked students about the types of edutainment technology for learning a foreign language that they are familiar with. It was found that mobile applications take the first place as the most renowned one. As it is shown in Fig. 1, online courses and edutainment sites take the second and third places respectively in the category of frequently mentioned types in students' answer sheets.

To analyze the frequency of edutainment technology in teaching a foreign language (task 3), students were also asked what types of edutainment technology they use more often at English lessons. The results are shown below in Fig. 2. It can be seen from Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 that familia-

rity values and frequency values for edutainment sites coincide. However, online courses and mobile applications frequency values are lower than familiarity values. It proves that not all familiar edutainment technology types are used by English teachers at lessons.

To analyze effectiveness of edutainment technology in teaching a foreign language (task 3), students answered the question: *How can using edutainment technology help students in learning foreign languages?* In this question several options were given together with a free one to be chosen. The answers for each reason of using edutainment technology in support of learning foreign languages were distributed in the following way:

- they increase motivation – 78%;
- they develop communication skills – 73%;
- they improve academic grades – 49%.

To gain educators' interests and difficulties in relation to the use of edutainment technology as a means of language training (task 4), English teachers were asked several questions:

What types of edutainment technology for teaching a foreign language do you know?

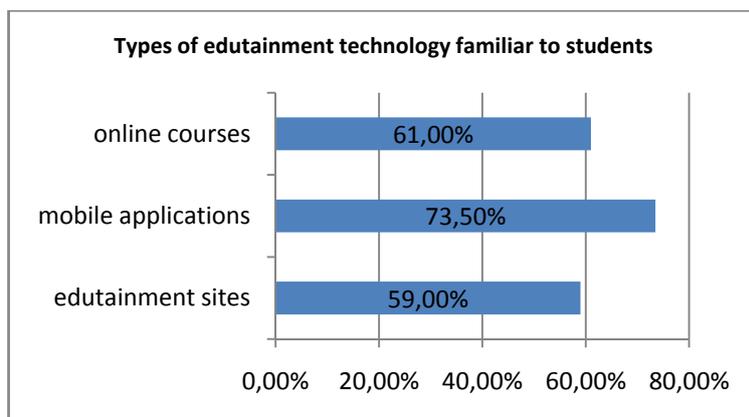


Fig. 1. Types of edutainment technology mentioned by familiarity among students

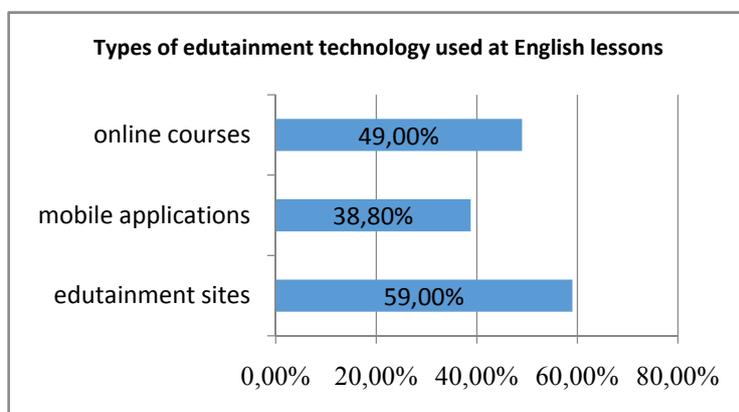


Fig. 2. Types of edutainment technology mentioned by frequency among students

English teachers were asked about the types of edutainment technology they are familiar with as a tool of teaching English. The responses are presented in Fig. 3. The most renowned type of edutainment technology among teachers is edutainment sites (72%). It is more than students know (59%). On the other hand, teachers are less familiar with mobile applications (64%) than students (73,5%). It can be explained by more frequent use of mobile phones by students and trying mobile apps. Mobile courses are least familiar to teachers in the range of edutainment technologies (56%).

What types of edutainment technology do you most often use at your English lessons? The question about most frequent use of edutainment technology by English teachers at their lessons showed lower values than the question about familiarity with them (Fig. 4). A bit more than a half of the respondents use edutainment sites (52%) at their lessons. Mobile applications and online courses are used by less than a half of the approached teachers – 40% and 44% respectively. The low values about applying the edutainment technology in practice can be explained by some issues that teachers experience. The issues were found separately in a questionnaire.

What difficulties do you experience in using edutainment technology? The answers to the question about issues of using edutainment tech-

nology revealed the possible reasons of the low values in the question about using different types of edutainment technology in practical classes of English. The majority of the survey participants (44%) consider that it takes too much time to prepare lessons using the edutainment technology. 36% of English teachers find it time-consuming to choose a suitable type of edutainment technology for the purpose of a lesson. There is some amount of the respondents (16%) who admit that they do not have enough knowledge for conducting lesson with using edutainment technology (Fig. 5).

The results clearly indicate that edutainment and gamified activities should become an integral part of the educational process [12]. Blending various edutainment technology types with traditional ways of teaching undoubtedly alters the patterns of foreign language teaching to make them satisfy the needs of modern international students [29]. Having taken into consideration the results of the needs analysis, the questionnaire and the interview there have been actively employed and integrated some edutainment activities to satisfy the needs of the students and to enhance their better academic integration. Motivation is considered to be a crucial factor that makes language learners produce a foreign language [13, 20]. A variety of game elements that enhance motivation and engage learners and thus

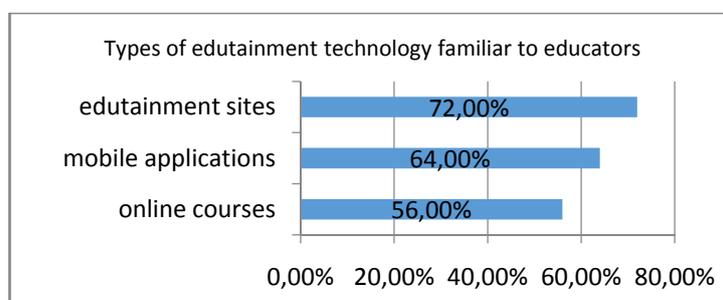


Fig. 3. Types of edutainment technology mentioned by familiarity among English teachers

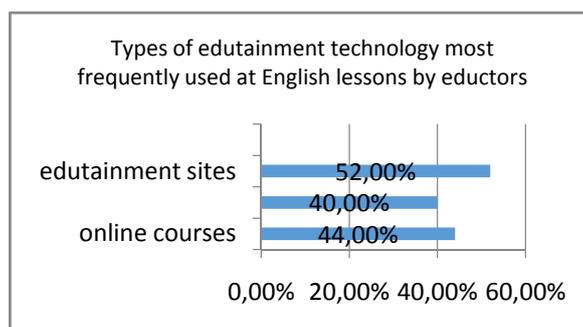


Fig. 4. Types of edutainment technology mentioned by frequency among English teachers

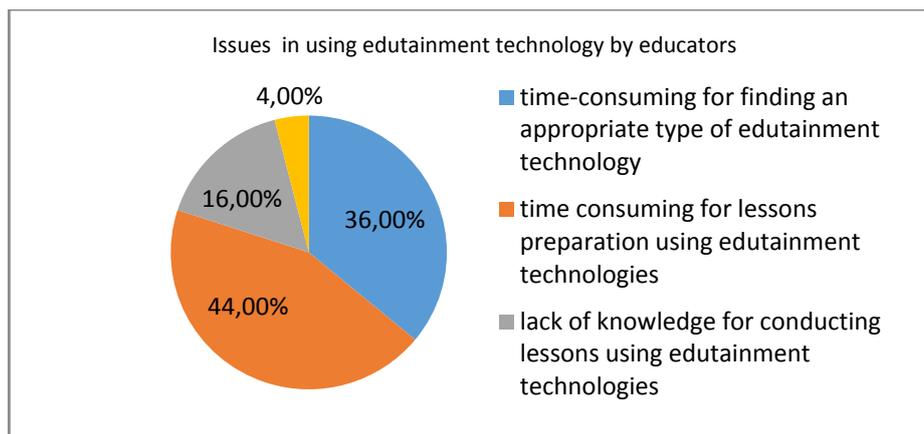


Fig. 5. Issues in using edutainment technology mentioned by English teachers

improve their communication skills should be preferred.

Some students tend to be passive and quite due to some individual, social or cultural reasons. Some are not cooperative at all and prefer to work on their own. Game elements and techniques make the atmosphere in the classroom more comfortable and stimulate students to participate in the process. Thus there have been widely employed such edutainment sites as Kahoot and Quizlet, mobile applications (Google Expeditions, Arts & Culture) and designed a new online language development course “English for General Purposes” (task 5 of our research).

Edutainment site Kahoot. It is hardly possible to imagine the modern world without a variety of mobile devices which have become an integral part of our everyday life. The majority of students own either a smartphone or a tablet and use these devices for all sorts of activities. So it seems reasonable to employ these mobile devices for educational purposes as well. We chose Kahoot as one of widely known and popular game-based learning platforms to compliment the traditional ways of teaching a foreign language. Students are enthusiastic about using their mobile devices in the classroom and the implementation of game elements and techniques seems appealing to them as it helps break the ice and start communication by creating friendly and positive atmosphere in the classroom [11]. Shy and introverted students of different cultural background find Kahoot very useful in creating cooperative and collaborative learning environment as it helps them overcome their shyness and be more engaged in the learning process. Educators decided to introduce Kahoot into bachelors' foreign language teaching process as this game-based learning platform creates competitive and

engaging atmosphere, makes students active participants of the educational process, provides immediate feedback and makes it possible to utilize adaptive learning technologies to adjust the tasks to the needs and level of individual students.

The course book for undergraduate students of South Ural State University is Touchstone 2 Second Edition by M. McCarthy, J. McCarten, H. Sandiford. It has been chosen in accordance with competence based and cultural approaches and is targeted at university students of nonlinguistic majors with pre-intermediate level. Students have 5 hours of English classes a week and there is a need to make them more engaged in the classroom activities on the one hand and practice English outside the classroom on the other hand. Kahoot is a good way to satisfy these needs. Each unit in the Students' Book starts with a unit opener that presents the unit theme and a warm-up activity. The unit opener page sets the scene for the unit topic and introduces new vocabulary. Students study English as a foreign language, so new words may make them feel puzzled. Kahoot quizzes provide a good opportunity to grab students' attention and improve their ability to grasp the meaning of new words and information (Table 3). In this case it makes them more independent in making decisions and drawing relevant conclusions.

The topic of Unit 1 is “Making Friends” and it is supposed to break the ice and make students get to know their classmates, learn how to start conversations with people they do not know and present themselves. International students usually find it rather challenging to start a conversation in a totally new environment and build relationships with their classmates, so Kahoot ideas like Student Selfie Kahoot is the way to make everybody feel at ease and be engaged. Educators also

need time to get to know their students and understand their feelings and mindsets. Kahoot provides a great number of free templates to create a quiz all about yourself for the first day of class in a very low-pressure, engaging way.

Table 3
The name of units and the corresponding vocabulary

Unit	Vocabulary
Celebrations	A graduation, an engagement, a wedding, a retirement
At home	A closet, a dresser, a drawer, a desk
Things happen	To break, to damage, to lose
Appearances	Thin, heavy, tall, blond
Interests	A guide, a recipe, a review, affordable, fabulous
Health	To cope with, to get a checkup, to work out, to take breaks

Each unit of the Students' Book provides some relevant new vocabulary and grammar points which are closely interconnected. This vocabulary and grammar material is presented in conversations, surveys, interviews, and phone messages (Table 4).

Table 4
Grammar and vocabulary topics

Grammar	Vocabulary
Present Simple	Interests, things in common
Past Simple	Childhood, school years
There + be	Location expressions, getting around
Possessive pronouns	Belongings, things at home
Comparisons	Describing people
Future Forms	Jobs and careers

Blind Kahoot is a very reasonable way to present and teach new concepts throughout a game and achieve long lasting effects [25]. It stimulates curiosity and deductive thinking, thus making students switch from passive perception of the material to active use of new vocabulary and grammar constructions in the context of specific communicative situations.

An important learning aim in every Touchstone lesson is to get students talking to each other. But it may be not that easy to make students engaged into effective spoken communication due to a great number of stumbling blocks. Pressure of speaking out loud in class, shyness, lack of confidence or knowledge, differences in cultural background make students reluctant to join a discussion. Discussion facilitation and

giving students voice in class lead not only to deeper knowledge but also enhance better and more efficient academic integration of students. Adding poll questions to Kahoot is a good way to create a more collaborative environment and lower the threshold of joining a discussion that an educator may employ. A poll provides a model answer or an answer pattern, leads students into the topic of discussion and may serve as an ice-breaker in the beginning of a class (Table 5).

Table 5
Lesson topics and corresponding poll questions

Lesson Topic	Poll
Favorite classes	What languages did you study at school?
Leisure time	What kind of things do students do in their leisure time?
Home habits	What home habits do people have?
Accidents happen	What accidents have you had?
Keeping in touch	How do you keep in touch?

To become active participants of the class students may be encouraged to create their own Kahoots. They may work either individually or create small groups to deepen their communicative collaboration. This non-traditional format of the quiz makes everybody actively involved and provides vast opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. This way Kahoot was implemented for the project "Around town". The students were supposed to choose one sub-topic and talk/ make a presentation about:

- the most interesting/fascinating places, shopping malls, monuments, buildings, bridges, restaurants, stadiums, cities, etc;
- world records (the best, the worst, the longest, the shortest, etc);
- finding places and getting around.

Thus Kahoot makes the language learning environment more interactive and gives students a voice both in the classroom and virtually as it is a great resource for collecting ideas and sparking discussions [21].

Edutainment site Quizlet. Foreign students quite often find it difficult to express themselves properly. Limited vocabulary impedes successful interaction and communication [1]. Quizlet application is one of mobile applications that can be employed to increase students' proficiency in English as a result of mastering English vocabulary. Students' adaptation to a new academic environment can go smoothly if they are able to

express themselves clearly without any miscommunication [24]. In order to create an involving and enriching vocabulary environment for international students there has been chosen such game-based tool as Quizlet.

A software programme Quizlet is gaining more and more popularity and is considered to be one of the fastest growing free education tools. The fact that Quizlet has 30 million users from 130 countries makes it reasonable to employ this software programme for university educational purposes. Both students and educators can make a free online account and then create and edit flashcards, quizzes and study sets.

Touchstone is a corpus-informed course which uses North American English in the Cambridge English Corpus. There is a language summary for each unit which contains about 50 words and phrases. Moreover, for each unit students are supposed to learn by heart at least 15 new words and expressions with definitions. It may be quite challenging as students have to learn not only the spelling and pronunciation of words. They should be able to provide a definition or a description and make up their own sentence with the word. Thus two-sided cards in Quizlet are really helpful, as one side may present a word or a phrase and another one may have a definition or a translation. The user sees only one side of the card and tries to reproduce the contents of the second side. To be graded the students have to present 45 words and phrases with relevant descriptions and corresponding examples after 3 units have been covered (Table 6). It may seem too challenging for some students, but Quizlet gamified learning support helps them overcome difficulties and accelerates the autonomy growth in vocabulary learning.

Table 6

Words and descriptions

Words	Descriptions
a goatee	a little short beard
a wig	false hair
cargo pants	baggy pants with pockets
platform shoes	shoes with thick soles
discreet	not noticeable
to overhear	hear without intending to
to warn of	to say there is a problem

So Kahoot and Quizlet can serve to create a playful context for language learning. Successful learning is all about motivation. The creation of engaging learning context and encouraging students to be independent learners may lead to very positive outcomes in development of lan-

guage skills and thus better integration into new academic environment [30].

Mobile applications (Google Arts & Culture, Google Expeditions). Modern world requires specialists who are ready to operate in a high-tech professional environment. The use of technologies of augmented (Augmented Reality, AR) and virtual (Virtual Reality, VR) realities is a key direction in the development of the professional sphere in the near future, including universities to optimize the process of forming the professional foreign language competence of students. The use of these technologies in the educational environment helps to visualize the educational material, supplement it with visual information technologies by reading the QR code with smartphones, tablets and other gadgets, increasing motivation and interest in learning. Google Expeditions, which is an application mainly intended for the needs of education, allows to take students on virtual journeys right in the classroom and explore objects in augmented reality [8]. In this way, they can study the sights, consider objects at the atomic level, swim next to sharks or go into outer space. Currently Google Expeditions is included in the larger Arts & Culture app.

The course book Touchstone has units devoted to the topic "Travelling" (e.g. Exploring the city, Interesting places), moreover students come from different corners of the world. So it seemed reasonable to work out a virtual expedition on the topic "It's a Wonderful World". Students got acquainted with a tour and information about various locations. They were also invited to discuss in pairs the distinctive features of each place, to share what interested / surprised / impressed them. Further, after watching the tour, the students were asked to create an advertisement for any location and mention its distinctive features and the types of indoor and outdoor activities that can be done there. Then the students were supposed to present the created advertisements to their group-mates. Then the presented advertisements were evaluated in accordance with the following assessment criteria: general information about the location, its unique features, the names of indoor and outdoor activities; creative approach to the presentation of advertising; the use of the relevant vocabulary and grammar. The final step was reflection. Thus students were encouraged to express themselves, exchange comments and take active part in discussions, which also contributed to a better assimilation of vocabulary on the topic "Travelling".

Implementation of the application “Google Expeditions” has a great educational potential as it increases the efficiency of the language learning process, stimulates active interaction within a group of students and develops speaking and listening skills, enriches vocabulary and thus helps to overcome the language barrier [16]. Moreover students become active participants of the educational process as they are supposed to produce ideas and express themselves during the class. Virtual journeys broaden the horizons of the world and serve to establish deeper cultural ties as students actively interact with each other and this way it becomes easier to integrate into a new cultural environment [7].

The online language development course “English for General Purposes”. South Ural State University widely employs the university corporate learning management system Moodle. Educators as well as students use Moodle on a regular basis, so it was reasonable to design a language course in the system which is familiar to the majority of the university educators and students and which would be aimed at the development of foreign language skills in the smart environment. So there has been implemented a new online language development course “English for General Purposes” which is based on a system, competence-focused and cultural approaches.

The course is targeted at university students of non-linguistic majors and is applied in multilingual university settings. The course contains plenty of additional materials to develop students' skills in the grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, writing, listening and speaking. All these

aspects are presented in 7 interconnected modules in each unit which are aimed at stimulating independent language learning. The course also presents attractive, memorable and action-oriented content. There is a strong visual component for each unit and it provides a very clear context for new language topics and leaves students with an active role in constructing the language. User-friendly interface and intuitive structure seem appealing as they do not challenge digital competence.

All units have the same structure and consist of interactive exercises, games and quizzes. Special attention is paid to the development of communication skills and establishing positive, engaging and creative interaction among students. Thus students are given a more active and participatory role.

Young people communicate a lot via the Internet and social networks, i.e. they post comments, have blogs and exchange their ideas and opinions. So the Writing module is implemented for a number of project game activities and provides clear, detailed instructions for guided communication. The example are given in Table 7.

Firstly students are supposed to express themselves in the written form. Thus they can take their time to think and come up with some really thought out ideas as they do not need to give any instant response. International students also benefit as they may be too shy or lack relevant vocabulary to respond immediately. Doing these project game activities in the written form eliminates these difficulties takes a positive approach to learning by helping students to focus on what they can do rather on what they can't.

Table 7

Project game activities

Project game activity	Vocabulary in use	Questions for discussion
Pros and cons of social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – e-mail – regular mail – convenient – fast/slow – punctuation/spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are your favourite social networks? – How often do you chat with your friends using social networks? – How often do you meet with your friends in real life? – Can you call yourself “a social network addict”?
Fashion trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fashionable – casual – in style/out of style – designer – trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is in fashion nowadays? – What clothes are going out of style? – What do you think about today's look? – Can you describe your favourite fashion style? – Do you always try to be in fashion?
Future inventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – computer technologies – space flights – goggles – wearable devices – virtual reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What technologies will be popular in the future? – What devices will be in great demand? – Will future inventions make life better or not? Why?

Further these writing activities may be developed in speaking projects. For instance the topic "Fashion trends" is developed in a casting game for students: you are the jury of the fashionable casting to the model agency. The candidates will tell about themselves: describe their appearances, their look and character features. Secret question: You should ask them to describe fashion trends of the future. After the casting you should decide together with your colleges 3 winners by voting and discussion. The discussion encourages active development of speaking skills, promotes cooperative learning and as a result increases tolerance and mutual respect of representatives of different cultures.

Implementation of a new online language development course "English for General Purposes" into the university language learning environment helps to increase the involvement of students into active and constructive participation and thus become more independent language learners. Moreover this course gives an opportunity to study new information in advance and prepare questions to be discussed in the classroom. Consequently foreign students increase their opportunities for better integration in the educational environment.

Conclusion

The research findings have revealed some thought-provoking insights into foreign students' and educators' perception of edutainment technology for learning and teaching a foreign language. The study has shown that the major part of foreign students are aware of some edutainment technology types but have never taken them into consideration as means of language learning. It leads to the assumption that educators do not widely use edutainment technology due to the fact

that their implementation is quite challenging. In particular some educators find edutainment technology discouraging as it requires a lot of time and effort to be mastered and adjusted into classroom activities.

Nevertheless students and educators are willing to master and implement the edutainment technology. Modern students have grown up surrounded by digital technologies, so they find it natural to study and communicate using the Internet, mobile phones and different courses online [4, 31]. Moreover, edutainment smart technology provides resources and tools to satisfy the diversity of students' needs and requirements. Educational institutions are also willing to enrich traditional teaching styles and upgrade academic environment. Edutainment technology can serve as a powerful tool to increase motivation and as a consequence to increase academic results. In particular, this technology provides engaging learning environment which promotes not only effective learning, but also active communication and interaction in a new academic environment [15, 18].

Wide and proper implementation of edutainment technology eliminates the blocking factors and promotes intercultural and language improvement. Besides, such a technology favor student-focused environment and is essential in modern educational settings.

We express our thanks to the PhD students of the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science of South Ural State University for the assistance in statistical analysis of the experimental data using SPSS and other related instruments: Kodirov Shahboz Sharifovich, junior researcher, Abotaleb Mostafa Salaheldin Abdelsalam, research engineer.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

Вклад авторов:

Кузьмина Н.Н. – постановка задачи исследования; научный менеджмент; обзор соответствующей литературы; концептуализация исследования; написание текста.

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Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Статья поступила в редакцию 15.01.2023

The article was submitted 15.01.2023