

How to Improve a 3-Dimensional Chat System for English Classes

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How to Improve a 3-Dimensional Chat System for English Classes

Yubun Suzuki

The author has been in charge of an experimental English class utilizing a text-based chat system with a 3-dimensional virtual cyberspace. Kyushu University students and Hokkaido University students tackle with tasks such as discussion and role-playing activity with the help of the Internet.

The present paper reports some observations and improvements in the English course in the spring semester of the academic year 2001.

After brief introductory sections, section 4 is focused on the two major functional improvements of the chat system, a random-pairing function and superimposition of instructions on the browser, which have made a great contribution to efficient class organization. This section also proposes some further improvements.

Section 5 draws the conclusion based on a questionnaire that we should give a sense of satisfaction to the students with topics of discussion and debate they feel familiarity with rather than distress them with harder tasks and difficult topics.

Section 6 reports the result of pre- and post-tests (G-TELP grade 3). It can not be claimed that students taking this course made more progress than other students. The author suspects that this could be attributed to the fact that the tests do not measure the type of ability that the students are expected to acquire in the chat class.

Section 7 claims as an answer to the question the author asked in Suzuki (2001. 1) that quantitative evaluation of chat log alone is enough to grade students without recourse to cumbersome qualitative analysis.

Section 8 shows the result and some analysis of the questionnaire obtained from those who took the chat course.