

THE ROLE OF VISUAL CONTENT IN DISTANCE LEARNING OF ENGLISH

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Nowadays, distance learning has become an essential part of education, especially in the field of English language teaching. The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed traditional teaching methods and increased the importance of visual content in the learning process. Visual materials such as images, videos, infographics, and interactive tools help learners better understand and retain information.

Researchers emphasize that modern education is increasingly based on multimodal communication, where meaning is created through a combination of verbal and visual elements. Gunther Kress highlights that learning in the 21st century requires the integration of different modes of communication, including visual ones [3].

Visual literacy is considered a key competence in modern education. Ukrainian scholars such as Iryna Shkola, Maryna Zuienko, and Iryna Tymynska emphasize the importance of integrating visual strategies into English language teaching, particularly in CLIL-oriented classrooms [8]. Similarly, Olha Palekha argues that in blended and distance learning environments visualisation becomes a central teaching tool that compensates for the lack of direct communication and helps learners process language material more effectively [6]. Moreover, Svitlana Fedorenko focuses on the concept of multimodal literacy, stating that modern learners need to develop skills to interpret and produce meaning through different modes, including visual ones [2].

International researchers also support this view. For example, Luc Pauwels studies visual communication and its role in education and research, emphasizing the importance of visual methods in understanding information [7].

Visual content used in distance learning can be divided into several types:

- static visuals (images, flashcards);
- dynamic visuals (videos, animations);
- interactive visuals (online quizzes, games);
- graphic organizers (charts, mind maps).

These types perform several important functions:

- explanatory (simplifying complex material);
- motivational (increasing student engagement);
- organizational (structuring information);
- communicative (supporting interaction).

Thus, visual content not only supports learning but also enhances communication in online environments. Research also shows that visual strategies improve understanding and engagement in language learning [1].

Visual materials significantly contribute to the development of all language skills:

- Vocabulary: images and flashcards help memorise words faster;
- Grammar: charts and schemes simplify understanding of rules;
- Listening: videos improve comprehension;
- Speaking: pictures stimulate discussion;
- Writing: infographics help organize ideas.

Research shows that students learn more effectively when visual elements are integrated into language learning. For example, studies on multimedia learning by Richard Mayer demonstrate that combining visual and verbal elements increases motivation and improves communication skills [10].

Modern online education actively uses various visual tools:

- presentation tools (PowerPoint, Google Slides);

- video platforms (YouTube);
- flashcard apps (Quizlet);
- interactive platforms (Kahoot, Canva).

These tools create engaging learning environments and support active participation. The use of augmented reality as an innovative visual tool is also discussed by Tarasenko and Amelina [9].

Despite its advantages, the use of visual content has some challenges:

- cognitive overload (too much information);
- distraction from learning goals;
- technical problems;
- low-quality or irrelevant materials.

Researchers also point out that students often lack critical visual literacy skills. Visual culture studies emphasize the need for critical interpretation of images in modern media environments [5].

In distance learning, the teacher plays a crucial role in:

- selecting appropriate visual materials;
- adapting content to students' needs;
- guiding students' attention;
- developing visual literacy skills.

Teachers must not only use visuals but also teach students how to interpret them effectively, as emphasized in visual design theory [4].

In conclusion, visual content plays a key role in distance learning of English. It enhances comprehension, increases motivation, and supports the development of language skills. However, its effective use requires careful selection, methodological support, and the development of students' visual literacy.

The integration of visual content into online English learning is not just a trend but a necessary component of modern education.

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METRO EXODUS AS CRITICAL DESIGN AND THE RHETORIC OF INFORMATION ISOLATION

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This paper presents a critical analysis of the digital narrative *Metro Exodus*, developed by the Ukrainian studio 4A Games. Moving beyond its classification as a post-apocalyptic first-person shooter, this study utilizes the framework of Critical Design, a practice that uses design objects to challenge narrow assumptions and preconceptions about the role of products in everyday life. By focusing on the game's Exodus mentality and its portrayal of systemic propaganda, the research explores how virtual spaces can be used to interrogate the mechanisms of imperial control and the psychological impact of isolation.

The 'Aurora' as Symbolic Agency

A central focus of this analysis is the train, the *Aurora*, which serves as the game's primary mobile hub. In the context of the Ukrainian national narrative, the *Aurora* is interpreted as more than a mechanical vehicle; it functions as a symbol of Radical Agency, the active movement away from the imperial center and the rejection of a fatalistic, static existence. The study argues that the game's design prioritizes personal responsibility for one's destiny over the passive acceptance of an imposed reality, reflecting a core tenet of the contemporary Ukrainian mindset regarding sovereignty and the path toward European integration.

Information Isolation and the Architecture of Control

The paper further investigates the game's depiction of jammers and information suppression as a form of **Speculative Realism**. Through the protagonist Artyom, the silent witness, the player encounters various micro-societies shaped by decades of total isolation. The research highlights the realization of the character Colonel Miller (that the populace was kept in a hole under the guise of security) as a profound critique of how authoritarian regimes manipulate fear. This narrative serves as a model of Critical Play, forcing the player to confront the danger of truth decay and the fragility of reality in the face of state-sponsored propaganda.

Relevance in the Age of Hybrid Warfare

The final section of the abstract addresses the temporal relevance of the game's themes. Although the plot regarding information isolation was written prior to the full-scale invasion of 2022, its resonance has only intensified. The study concludes that *Metro Exodus* acts as an interactive monument to the power of truth. It proves that within the Ukrainian development ethos, games are not merely tools for entertainment, but are sophisticated platforms for the defense of democratic values through narrative resistance.