LINGUODIAGNOSTIC POSSIBILITIES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR WEBQUEST TECHNOLOGIES IN DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract The article examines the linguodiagnostic potential of WebQuest technology, that is, its capacity to reveal the level and features of learners' language use, and proposes criteria for assessing WebQuest work. A WebQuest is treated as a form of digital educational discourse in which learners read, interact and produce texts, and therefore leave a rich trace of language data. Drawing on research in task-based teaching, learner language analysis and language assessment, the article outlines the kinds of evidence a WebQuest can provide and presents an analytic set of criteria that separates language performance from content. Limits of the approach, including group work, copying and the use of AI tools, are discussed, and practical proposals are offered for English language teachers.

Keywords WebQuest, linguodiagnostics, language assessment, assessment criteria, digital educational discourse, learner language, English language teaching.

RAQAMLI TA'LIM DISKURSIDA WEBQUEST TEXNOLOGIYALARINING LINGVODIAGNOSTIK IMKONIYATLARI VA BAHOLASH MEZONLARI

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Annotatsiya. Maqolada WebQuest texnologiyasining lingvodiagnostik salohiyati, ya'ni o'quvchilar nutqining darajasi va xususiyatlarini aniqlash imkoniyati o'rganiladi hamda WebQuest ishlarini baholash mezonlari taklif etiladi. WebQuest o'quvchilar o'qiydigan, muloqot qiladigan va matn yaratadigan raqamli ta'lim diskursi shakli sifatida qaraladi, shu sababli u boy til materialini qoldiradi. Topshiriqqa asoslangan ta'lim, o'quvchi nutqini tahlil qilish va tilni baholash bo'yicha tadqiqotlarga tayanib, WebQuest beradigan dalil turlari ko'rsatiladi va til ko'rsatkichlarini mazmundan ajratadigan analitik mezonlar tizimi berilgan. Guruhda ishlash, ko'chirmachilik va sun'iy intellekt vositalaridan foydalanish kabi cheklovlar muhokama qilinib, ingliz tili o'qituvchilari uchun amaliy takliflar beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: WebQuest, lingvodiagnostika, tilni baholash, baholash mezonlari, raqamli ta'lim diskursi, o'quvchi nutqi, ingliz tilini o'qitish.

ЛИНГВОДИАГНОСТИЧЕСКИЕ ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ И КРИТЕРИИ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ ВЕБ-КВЕСТ В ЦИФРОВОМ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

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Аннотация. В статье исследуется лингводиагностический потенциал технологии веб-квест, то есть её способность выявлять уровень и особенности речи обучающихся, и предлагаются критерии оценивания веб-квестов. Веб-квест рассматривается как форма цифрового образовательного дискурса, в котором обучающиеся читают, взаимодействуют и создают тексты, а значит, оставляют богатый языковой материал. На основе исследований по заданийному обучению, анализу языка учащихся и оцениванию языковых навыков показано, какие данные может дать веб-квест, и предложена система аналитических критериев, отделяющая языковые показатели от содержательных. Обсуждаются ограничения подхода, включая групповую работу, копирование и использование инструментов ИИ, и даны практические рекомендации для преподавателей английского языка.

Ключевые слова: веб-квест, лингводиагностика, оценивание языковых навыков, критерии оценивания, цифровой образовательный дискурс, язык обучающегося, преподавание английского языка.

Introduction. The WebQuest was introduced by Bernie Dodge in the mid-1990s as an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information learners work with comes from the web [1]. Students receive a task, a set of sources and a clear way of working, and they end up with a product: a report, a presentation, a recommendation. The format has been used in many subjects, and it has been popular in language teaching because it gives learners a reason to read, talk and write about something real.

In Uzbekistan, the interest in such formats fits the wider move toward digital education set out in the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy [2] and the increased attention to foreign language learning, including the use of the Common European Framework as a reference for levels [3]. Teachers who run WebQuests, however, usually face the same problem when it comes to grading. The product is easy to judge for content, but the language behind it tends to disappear into a single mark. A student who copies fluent paragraphs from a source and a student who

struggles through their own sentences can receive similar grades if the criteria only ask whether the task was completed.

Here the idea of linguodiagnostics becomes useful. As we understand it, the term refers to methods of identifying the level, features and problems of learners' language development through the analysis of their language production. The aim of this article is to describe the linguodiagnostic possibilities of WebQuest technology and to propose criteria for assessing WebQuest work that make language performance visible.

Research methodology. The study relies on the analysis of academic literature, comparative analysis of assessment approaches, and modelling, which here means building a set of criteria from the principles found in the literature. It should be stated openly that the proposed criteria have not been tested in a classroom experiment by the author; they are a framework intended for piloting.

Main part (results and discussion).

A WebQuest as digital educational discourse. A WebQuest is more than a list of links. During one task a learner reads web texts of different kinds, takes notes, exchanges messages with group members, drafts and revises, and finally presents a product. Each of these activities is a different kind of discourse, and digital settings bring their own features, from shorter and more informal exchanges to the mixing of text, images and links [8]. Because the task has a real purpose, a WebQuest fits well with task-based language teaching, which treats language learning as something that happens through meaningful tasks rather than isolated exercises [6], and with the wider view of technology in language learning as a source of rich, interactive input and output [7]. The result for the teacher is an unusually large amount of learner language in one place.

What can be diagnosed. Research on learner language gives us tools for reading that material. The classic argument of S. P. Corder is that learners' errors are not just failures; they show what the learner has understood about the language and which strategies are being used [9]. R. Ellis and G. Barkhuizen describe in detail how learner language can be collected and analysed [10]. Another widely used lens is the triad of complexity, accuracy and fluency, which describes performance in terms of how varied and elaborate the language is, how correct it is,

and how smoothly it flows [11]. In a WebQuest each of these can be linked to specific evidence. Drafts and version history show how accuracy changes during revision. Notes and the final text show whether the student can paraphrase or only copy. Forum or chat logs show how meaning is negotiated and how the learner handles questions and replies. A short written reflection shows how well the learner notices their own problems. None of this needs a separate test, since the data already exist as part of the task.

What research says about WebQuests. It is worth being careful about what is known. A review of research by Abbitt and Ophus found that studies of WebQuests mostly report positive perceptions from teachers and students, while rigorous evidence on learning outcomes is limited [5]. T. March, who has written widely about the format, argues that the quality of a WebQuest depends on how well it demands real thinking and transformation of information, not only collection of it [4]. For assessment, this means two things. The format has potential, but it cannot be assumed to work on its own, and the assessment needs to be designed as carefully as the task.

Principles for the criteria. Language assessment theory offers a practical checklist: a good assessment should be valid, reliable, authentic, practical and have a beneficial effect on teaching and learning [12]. For WebQuests, validity means that the criteria measure language performance and are not swallowed up by content or by technical polish. Reliability is helped by clear analytic rubrics, examples of work at different levels and some training of raters, which a review by Jonsson and Svingby links to more consistent scoring [13]. Sharing the rubric with students in advance, as H. Andrade suggests, also turns it into a learning tool instead of a hidden measure [14]. For describing levels, the CEFR Companion Volume is a natural reference, since it includes descriptors for online interaction and mediation, which are exactly the activities that a WebQuest involves [15].

Proposed criteria. Based on these principles we propose eight criteria, summarised in Table 1. Two of them concern the task itself and the use of sources. Four describe language performance: accuracy, range and complexity, discourse organisation, and interaction. The last two, digital literacy and reflection, take into account that in a WebQuest the learner works as a researcher as well as a language user. The language criteria are deliberately separated from the

content criterion so that a student with strong ideas and weak grammar, or the reverse, is not described by one number.

Table 1. Proposed criteria for assessing language performance in a WebQuest

Criterion	What is observed	Evidence in the WebQuest	Sign of strong performance
Task fulfilment and content	Relevance, accuracy and depth of the product	Final product; teacher checklist	Answers the task fully; claims are backed by sources
Use of sources	Understanding of web texts, paraphrase, attribution	Notes, drafts, reference list	Own wording; sources named; no pasted blocks
Language accuracy	Grammar, vocabulary and spelling errors, and what they show	Drafts, final text, error log	Errors are rare and mostly slips; self-correction is visible
Range and complexity	Variety of vocabulary and structures for the level	Final product, written reflection	Topic vocabulary and varied sentences used with control
Discourse organisation	Coherence, cohesion, register, genre	Final product, presentation	Clear structure; register suits audience and format
Interaction and collaboration	Turn-taking, negotiation of meaning, each member’s contribution	Forum or chat logs, version history	Asks, clarifies and responds; each student’s part is visible
Digital and information literacy	Search strategy, evaluation of sources	Search notes, source evaluation sheet	Compares sources and rejects weak ones with reasons
Reflection	Awareness of own language progress	Learning journal	Names specific problems and next steps

Limits and cautions. Several difficulties should be recognised. Group work hides individual contributions, so evidence such as version history and individual reflections is needed to see who did what. Copying from sources and the use of translation or AI tools can make a text look better than the student's real level, which is why the use of sources and the process evidence matter more than the polished product. Collecting and reading so much evidence takes time, and a teacher cannot analyse every log for every student; sampling and focusing on a few criteria at a time is a realistic compromise. Finally, diagnosis is not the same as grading. The same information can serve formative purposes, helping the student to improve, and it does not have to be turned into marks.

Proposals. On the basis of the analysis we consider the following measures appropriate. First, the teacher should plan language evidence into the WebQuest from the start: drafts, notes, discussion logs and a short reflection. Second, language criteria should be assessed separately from content, using an analytic rubric. Third, the rubric and examples of work at different levels should be shared with students before they begin. Fourth, individual contributions should be made visible through version history, role descriptions and personal reflections. Fifth, criteria can be linked to CEFR descriptors so that results are comparable with other forms of assessment. Sixth, the rules for using translation and AI tools should be stated in the task, with students asked to declare what they used. Seventh, the criteria should be piloted with a small group and revised on the basis of how well they distinguish between different performances.

Conclusion. A WebQuest produces a large amount of authentic learner language, but this material is often wasted when assessment looks only at the finished product. Approaching the WebQuest from the point of view of linguodiagnostics makes it possible to see how learners read, interact, revise and write, and to give feedback that is based on evidence. The proposed criteria are a starting point rather than a finished instrument, and they need to be tested in real classrooms. If that is done carefully, the WebQuest can become not only a motivating task but also a reliable source of information about the development of learners' language.

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