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Using Virtual Reality to Assess Communicational Skills During a Collaborative Task with Time Pressure

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Theoretical background

- **Communication** is an essential **non-technical skill** for any **professional interaction**.
 - Proven link between non-technical skills and accidents in high-risk jobs.

in an unusual and challenging situation.

Ο

Virtual reality will be used as a means to assess communication skills





THE VR SIMULATION : THE TASK

- A collective task resolution in a sub-marine environment.
- The team have to **collaborate** and **communicate** to succeed.



Task Objective

Assemble various items to produce a final piece

During the simulation, participants must :

- ✓ Comply with a set of rules
- Manage stress caused by various disruptive and stressful elements (errors, noise...)
- Deal with Time pressure

Submarine task



First part of the simulation

The preparatory task Familiarization with the VR and virtual controls



Second part of the simulation

The effective task Support to access and study target NTS

Inter-group comparison

Study the evolution of Group performance between simulation start and finish Piece-by-piece performance

Intra-group comparison

Study the difference in performance between groups

Method

 23 participants μ_{age}=22.5 years; σ_{age}= .97 years
5th-year students from the same engineering school Participants randomly divided into 4 groups

Quantitative and qualitative data collected through simulation Per group and per participant



Oasis : Virtual reality room



The quantitative data collected through simulation Per group and per participant

Sorting and organizing quantitative data

Precise performance indicators



Audio recordings of verbal interactions Video screenshots

Transcription of qualitative data





Results

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Performance indicators



- $\,\circ\,$ Time taken for the whole mission
- \circ Number of errors
- $\,\circ\,$ Time taken for each subtask
- $\,\circ\,$ Number of errors per subtask

QUALITATIVE DATA Language indicators



- $\,\circ\,$ Number of participants interventions
- Language structure
- $\,\circ\,$ Type of Verbal actions produced
 - \Rightarrow Item 1 Vs Item 2 Vs 3,...item x.
 - \Rightarrow Whole group performance level

Global results

First subtask $\mu t = 07'48$ μ erreurs = 9

Natural language

Unstructured, negotiated meaning, interpretation, universal, complex, lengthy

EMRT04 : pour la C89B il me faut un gy, 1 un gyroscope en 2 *l'hélice en 3 l'explosif en 4 un détonateur en 5 un moteur* EMRT01 : C'est moi qui ai le gyroscope EMRT24 : Comment tu sais? EMRT01 : là j'ai lancé la production, quand tu cliques sur catalogue EMRT24 : Ouais, moi j'ai détonateur, il faut quoi comme détonateur euh Maxence? EMRT20 : Regarde sur le plan tu les as pas? EMRT04 : euh moi je crois que je peux pas voir en tout cas pour moi EMRT24 : ah si oui excuse-moi, ok

Evolution of performance indicators

Evolution of the used language

Last subtask $\mu t = 00'50$ μ erreurs = 0.33

Operative language

Structured, concise, restricted lexicon, monosemic, task-specific



Quantitative data



Three types of group stand out

• **G1** et **G2** performances increases between piece 1

and piece 2, and stabilizes after piece 3.

• **G3** performance is **constant** with no significant

variation in the production of the 6 pieces.

• G4 whose performance fluctuates unexpectedly

Performance indicators at two levels:

- Time /errors
- Task progress level



- Overall, the number of interventions decreases as the task progresses.
- For G4 with a number of interventions that increases between the first and second part.

Qualitative results : the content



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1st piece

Qualitative results : the content



Conclusions & perspectives

⇒ New immersive technologies, such as VR, can contribute to the study of nontechnical skills, as communication competencies.

What's new?

Non-domain-specific immersive environment

X Assessing communicational skills

- For professionals : continuing education and occupational risk reduction purposes.
- For researchers : studying various interaction situations.

Conclusions & perspectives

What's next?

- Future research : different demographic = targeting professionals already employed in various industries.
- Compare the communication skills of future professionals Vs professionals already employed.
- The Debriefing process after simulation to engage in a process of reflexivity.
- Measure the long-term effects of VR training on communication skills.

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