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HIRE ME!: Interactive Gaming Simulation as a Teaching Aid to Enhance English Speaking Skills Among UTHM Students

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Abstract

English is the dominant language in many nations throughout the world. Nonetheless, despite the government's efforts, Malaysian university students still see speaking English as a daunting endeavour. This article discusses how interactive simulation games may be used as a teaching tool to help Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) students improve their English-speaking abilities. Furthermore, the purpose of this research is to study the fundamentals of English-speaking skills, to design an informative and appealing interactive simulation gaming as a teaching aid, and to verify the effectiveness of interactive simulation gaming in enhancing English-speaking abilities. A mixed method design combining

qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches was employed. A semi-structured interview was conducted with a professor from the Centre for Language Studies at UTHM, and the collected data were carefully verified with content analysis. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed among 69 UTHM students from different faculties to gather insights on how to design an interactive and engaging gaming simulator for English speaking learning. Once the data have been collected, it will be thoroughly analysed and validate with descriptive analysis. The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the fundamental aspects of English language learning and provide opportunities for further improvement and refinement of the game. Future studies could focus on refining the game's aesthetics and overall visual appeal, creating a more immersive and captivating gaming experience, and incorporating elements of gamification to further enhance motivation and drive sustained engagement. The game can be created by making it into Virtual reality, the players are able to immerse the gameplay of feeling in a real situation of being interview while answer the questions that has been given out by the game has provided.

Keywords Animated cartoons; Interactive simulation gaming; English speaking skills; Teaching aid

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Introduction

Nowadays, it is critical for students to achieve a high level of English proficiency to communicate effectively in both academic and professional contexts, as English is widely used as an international language of communication across various industries, such as medicine, engineering, law, and business. Students must acquire the four fundamental linguistic abilities of hearing, speaking, writing, and reading in order to learn the language (Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021). While all these abilities are necessary for good communication, speaking is especially crucial, since it is used in both official and casual situations.

One (1) prominent issue is that Malaysian employers are often reluctant to hire job applicants who lack proficiency in English (Ajleaa & Maarof, 2018). Graduates with strong English language skills are preferred by most employers due to the language's global significance in fields like business, entertainment, medicine, law, and more. Students might struggle with formal speaking situations, leading to anxiety and difficulty constructing coherent sentences. Thus, preparation and motivation are crucial for students to succeed in the working phase.

Additionally, traditional learning methods, such as reciting passages from textbooks or listening to recorded materials, can become monotonous and less effective in terms of time and cost (Muhammad et al., 2020). Unfortunately, some universities still rely on outdated teaching approaches, lacking active learning experiences in the classroom. This contributes to students' shyness in speaking, especially in front of large groups, leading to a lack of confidence and developing speaking anxiety. To address these challenges, the project proposes using interactive gaming simulations to make learning fun, engaging, and helpful. It encourages students to practise English conversation and improve their language proficiency.

The significance of this research lies in its ability to teach English speaking to students in a way that is enjoyable, interactive, and engaging in learning. Furthermore, there are actually many games for educational purposes, which can make it into puzzles, strategy etc and this is a more effective way of learning and more enjoyable. Seeing this opportunity, implementing game specific simulation types will surely be helpful as a teaching aid to

university students. Therefore, the aim of this research is (i) to study the fundamentals of English-speaking skills, (ii) to design an informative and appealing interactive simulation gaming as a teaching aid, (iii) verify the effectiveness of interactive simulation gaming in enhancing English-speaking abilities. The study targets UTHM Pagoh students for implementing a game as a great alternative method for students to learn English, as it can train them to speak confidently in two-way conversations. This research is effective and easy to use because people can play different difficulties in the game, which are easy, medium, and hard.

The subsequent section will provide an overview of the research's background, followed by a description of the methodology employed. Section 4 will delve into the product's development, followed by the presentation of results and subsequent discussion. The conclusion will serve as the final section of this paper.

Literature Review

English speaking applications or apps are well known way ahead of time and have been constantly developing for years. Speaking English is difficult because speakers must be proficient in many areas: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension; undeniably, it could take years to master the English language. The major problem with speaking in English is the lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes because of their limited vocabulary, or fear of judgement. Therefore, developing a game that is easy to use, efficient, and engaging is deemed to have a positive impact on encouraging and motivating students in learning English. There are a few apps or products that had similar concepts to that of HIRE ME!, where they were used as references in the development of the game. For instance, Cake, Rosetta Stone Reflex, Plato.io, and Dialog Flow were compared in terms of their features, advantages, and disadvantages for an overall review.

Table 1 Differences between the existing products

| Product | Features | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|--|--|--|
| Cake (Chotimah, 2022), (Octavianita et al., 2022) | YouTube video clip that includes subtitles, speaking practice with native speakers, and the AI Speech Recognition feature (which is to correct pronunciation). | Fun and easy to understand. Fast and efficient way to learn English. | Did not provide any technical information on how the app functioning, as it is the company's belonging. |
| Rosetta Stone Reflex (Hoenig & Batliner, 2012) | Use of speech recognition technology to make utterance verification decisions, detect grammatical error, and provide feedback. | One-on-one conversation practice with tutor who is a native speaker, receive immediate feedback. | use of speech recognition technology to make utterance verification decisions, detect grammatical error, and provide feedback. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Plato.io (Muhammad et al., 2019) | Web Speech API for Speech Recognition to train students to speak and provide experience in practising two-way conversations. | Simple and easy interface to interact for user. | Complicated method and the need to be precise about the coding. |
| Dialog Flow (Muhammad et al., 2020) | Using chatbot to develop English conversation. This includes speech recognition and AI technology with Dialog Flow platform as the AI engine. | Almost all the responses have high accuracy except for a few responses. | Need to be precise regarding responses, as it could cause 0% accuracy for responses. |

Table 1 shows that most of the product used a similar feature, which is speech recognition to create an English-speaking app.

Cake, an innovative language-learning platform, stands out from traditional methods by utilizing pre-existing YouTube content within its app, offering learners a captivating and engaging experience. In contrast, HIRE ME! takes a unique approach as it involves the creation of original animated scenarios, specifically centred around the theme of interviews. Both Cake and HIRE ME! share the common goal of providing a platform for practicing speaking skills; however, HIRE ME! distinguishes itself by emphasizing interaction with natural speakers and incorporating subtitles for enhanced comprehension. Notably, Cake has served as an inspiration to develop a simulation game prototype aimed at improving learners' speaking proficiency through the integration of AI Speech Recognition technology, delivering instant pronunciation feedback. The overarching objective is to streamline and enhance the language-learning process, making it more efficient and enjoyable for users by immersing them in dynamic, interactive scenarios.

Rosetta Stone Reflex adopts a similar approach, revolving around immersive one-on-one conversation practice within real-life scenarios. Through the app, users can engage in simulated conversational settings, immersing themselves in various scenes. This unique simulation assigns learners a specific character role, prompting them to repeat anticipated responses for each dialogue act. The aim is to bolster comprehension, automaticity, and confidence in conversational dialogue. By spotlighting an office interview scenario, the app directly addresses the research problem faced by university students struggling with limited English proficiency, hindering their job opportunities. The focused approach of providing students with a practical scenario for practicing closely mirrors real-life situations, offering a valuable resource for skill development.

Plato.io recommends opting for a web-based application over creating a traditional software application, in line with the objectives of their game prototype. This platform integrates advanced features, notably harnessing speech recognition technology. Within Plato.io, users have the opportunity to participate in grammatical and situational-based conversations, a departure from the more limited scope of "HIRE ME!", which focuses solely on situational exchanges. The situational-based conversations in Plato.io entail two-person role plays where characters engage in routine activities. Furthermore, the platform provides pre-printed texts that players can utilise to improve their speaking skills and oral fluency.

The research approach's significance stems from its superior effectiveness when contrasted with Dialog Flow's adaptable nature in generating a variety of responses to user inputs. By concentrating on a single recommended script, the model guarantees consistency and coherence, minimizing user engagement while prioritizing efficiency over impulsivity. This strategic focus leads to more meaningful interactions, rendering the system more proficient in delivering scripted responses than Dialog Flow, despite the latter's incorporation of speech recognition technology for enhanced interactive capabilities. This proves especially advantageous in situations where clear communication and efficient interactions are essential.

Methodology

This research employed two (2) data collection methods, namely qualitative and quantitative approaches. The emphasis was on utilizing interviews and questionnaires as the primary mediums for gathering information.

For the qualitative method, one (1) approach involved conducting an interview session to gather related information with Prof. Madya Siti Noor Fazelah Binti Mohd Noor from the English and Linguistic Department at University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor. The interview aims to understand the fundamentals of English-speaking skills, and it was conducted in a semi-structured manner, incorporating open-ended questions. The questions revolved around topics, such as the deeper understanding of fundamentals of English, the struggle students faced in speaking English and the struggle of fresh graduates in succeeding in job interviews. Additionally, the interview explored the potential of using games as effective learning aids. After the interview

session ended, the used content analysis to decipher and categorise the important information to enhance the research finding.

There were two (2) phases of the questionnaire: (i) to design an informative and appealing interactive simulation gaming as a teaching aid; and (ii) to verify the effectiveness of interactive simulation gaming in enhancing English speaking abilities. The first phase of the questionnaire includes demographic, preferences, design, and gaming aspects. In the second phase of the questionnaire, demographic, rating for design, UI, and UX were included. Both questionnaires used the same type of analysis, which is descriptive analysis.

Content analysis is a research method that involves systematically analysing and interpreting the content of various forms of communication, such as written, verbal, or visual materials, to gain meaningful insights and draw conclusions. In this research content analysis was utilised specifically during the interview with Prof. Madya Siti Noor Fazelah Binti Mohd Noor from the English and Linguistic Department at University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia Parit Raja (UTHM). By applying content analysis to the interview data, the researchers were able to carefully examine and extract relevant information from Prof. Madya Siti Noor Fazelah's responses. This approach facilitated a structured and in-depth analysis of the interview content, enabling the researchers to derive valuable insights and contribute to the overall research objectives.

Descriptive analysis is a statistical method used to summarise and describe the main features of a dataset or research findings. It involves organising, presenting, and interpreting data in a meaningful way to gain a comprehensive understanding of the variables under study. In this research, descriptive analysis was applied to the data gathered from questionnaires distributed to UTHM students from various departments. The first questionnaire aimed to design a game that enhances English speaking skills, while the second phase questionnaire assessed the game's effectiveness. By utilising descriptive analysis, the researchers were able to effectively summarise and interpret the questionnaire responses, providing valuable insights into the students' perceptions and experiences with the game. This approach facilitated a comprehensive evaluation of the game's impact on improving English-speaking abilities among the participants.

Product Development

The objective of this research is to create an engaging and interactive gaming simulation that incorporates a combination of three-dimensional (3D) animation, two-dimensional (2D) animation, and Motion Graphic elements. It goes beyond simply developing a game by including cutscenes that contribute to the overall storyline. This phase of the research is vital because this product has numerous errors and challenges that need to be overcome to create this product successfully.

Pre-production

During the pre-production phase, emphasis on key elements for developing an impactful animated simulation game aimed at enhancing English-speaking abilities. This involved various aspects, including concept art, script development, storyboard creation, and the design of characters and environments. Concept art played a pivotal role in visualizing the game's aesthetic, while a meticulously crafted script provided direction for the narrative and dialogues. The creation of a storyboard, coupled with detailed character and environment design, proved indispensable in mapping out visual sequences and interactions, contributing significantly to the overall success of the production.

Character and Environments Design

Engaged in extensive character exploration, numerous experiments were conducted to finalise the appearance of the characters. Feedback from the supervisor and lecturers was actively sought, considering their opinions on the designs. The selection process ultimately focused on choosing a design that closely resembles the preferences of the target audience, which, in this case, is the university students. Figure 1 illustrates the character exploration for Character 1 (Iman 2D), while Figure 2 demonstrates the chosen design through a turnaround of Character 1 (Iman 2D).

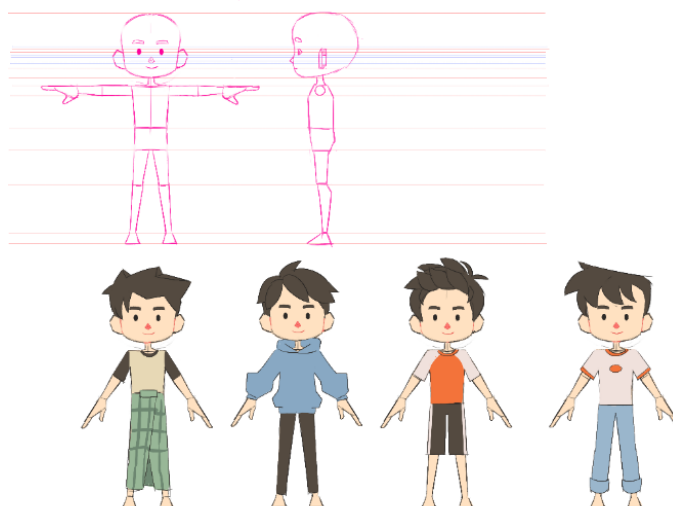


Figure 1 Character Exploration Character 1 (Iman 2D)

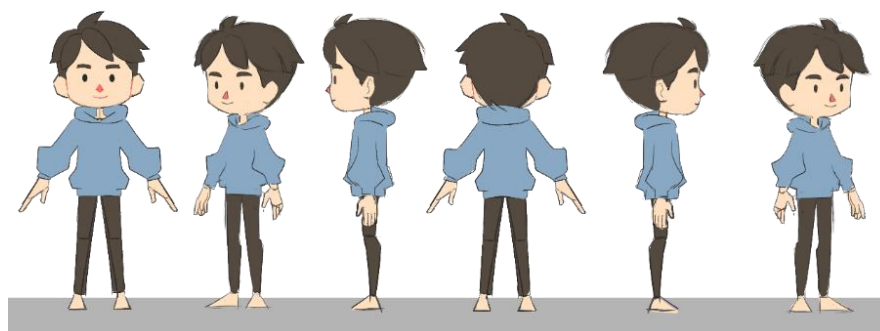


Figure 2 Character 1 (Iman 2D) Turnaround of Design that was Chosen

The design in Figure 2 was chosen because it is fitting and related to university students. Commonly, young adults will wear comfortable outfits while look slightly fashionable. Thus, the hoodie was chosen. Other than that, when building the personality for the character, the strike to make him relatable to students. The struggles the main character faces and how he encounters the problem were considered to foster a positive influence and inspire the students to never back down.

Meanwhile, when creating the 3D models: Character 1 (Iman 3D) and Character 2 (Interviewer), as portrayed in Figure 3, the aimed to model a low-poly character for its efficiency and suitability for real-time rendering in the game. The characters' visual features were carefully crafted to convey their roles and emotions. Both characters shared a similar base structure but differed in various features, such as hair, face, nose, and outfits. Character 2 (Iman 3D) was designed to resemble his 2D model. He also had brown hair, eyes, and thick

eyebrows, with a slightly red nose. In terms of attire, Iman wore a white button-up shirt with a blue tie, presenting a formal and professional appearance. On the other hand, the Interviewer’s 3D model aimed to convey an intimidating yet friendly presence. He had a clean and smart overall look, highlighting his role as the boss of the company. The Interviewer was dressed in a brown suit, a white tie, and a black button-up shirt. He had black, slightly slicked-back hair with an ivy league style. To emphasise his serious and strict nature, the Interviewer’s facial features included slit eyes and thin, angry-looking eyebrows. Figure 3 shown Character 2 (Iman 3D) and Character 3 (Interviewer) model sheet.

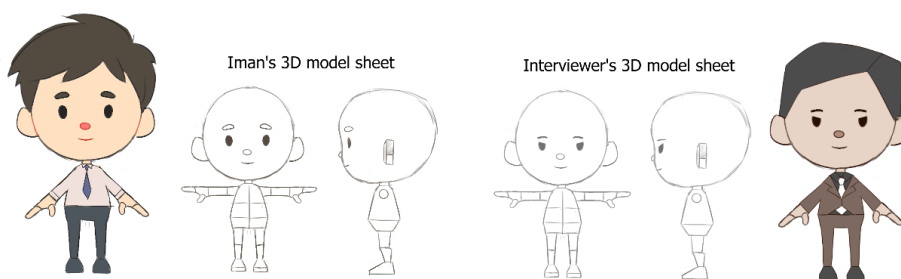


Figure 3 Character 2 (Iman 3D) and Character 3 (Interviewer) Model Sheet

Prior to delving into the intricate realm of 3D modelling, the project commenced with the crucial phase of sketching to delineate the envisioned environment. Seeking valuable input from the supervisor, critiques and advice played a pivotal role in fine-tuning the design, resulting in subtle yet impactful adjustments. The culmination of this iterative process is vividly portrayed in Figure 4, showcasing a detailed sketch that encapsulates the intricacies of Iman's bedroom, Iman's house, the office, and the dynamic game lobby.

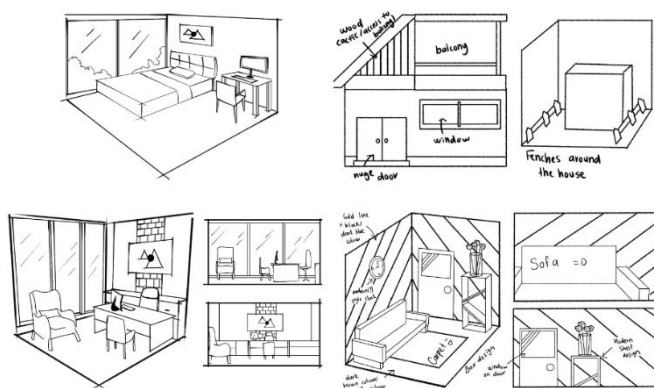


Figure 4 Sketches of Iman’s Bedroom, Iman’s House, Office, and Game Lobby

Production

Each facet of the production phase plays a crucial role in delivering a polished product. In the realm of 2D animation, Toon Boom Harmony's capabilities were harnessed to bring visual narratives to life. The realm of 3D modelling and animation found its creative hub in Blender, where intricate techniques and references converged to sculpt detailed and captivating models. This amalgamation of skills and tools contributed significantly to the overall aesthetic and visual appeal. The addition of motion graphics, fine-tuned with Adobe Premiere Pro, not only provided a finishing touch but also served as informative beacons for users, seamlessly integrating aesthetics with functionality. Together, these elements harmonise to manifest a product that not only looks impressive but also communicates effectively with its audience.

2D animation

The initiation of the 2D animation journey commences with the meticulous development of a comprehensive character sheet that encompasses turnaround views. This sheet becomes an invaluable reference for the 2D animator, ensuring not only the consistency of the character's appearance but also expediting the animation process significantly. The chosen industry-standard software, such as Toon Boom Harmony, serves as the medium to breathe life into these characters.

Simultaneously, the backdrop undergoes a transformation in the 3D realm. The 2D animator collaborates closely with the 3D modeller, offering guidance on crafting background scenes from specific angles to seamlessly align with the storytelling narrative. Following the rendering of backgrounds, a crucial step ensues – the separation of elements into distinct layers, comprising foreground, middle ground, and background components. This intricate task is deftly executed in Photoshop, culminating in the preservation of these layered backgrounds in PNG format for further utilisation.

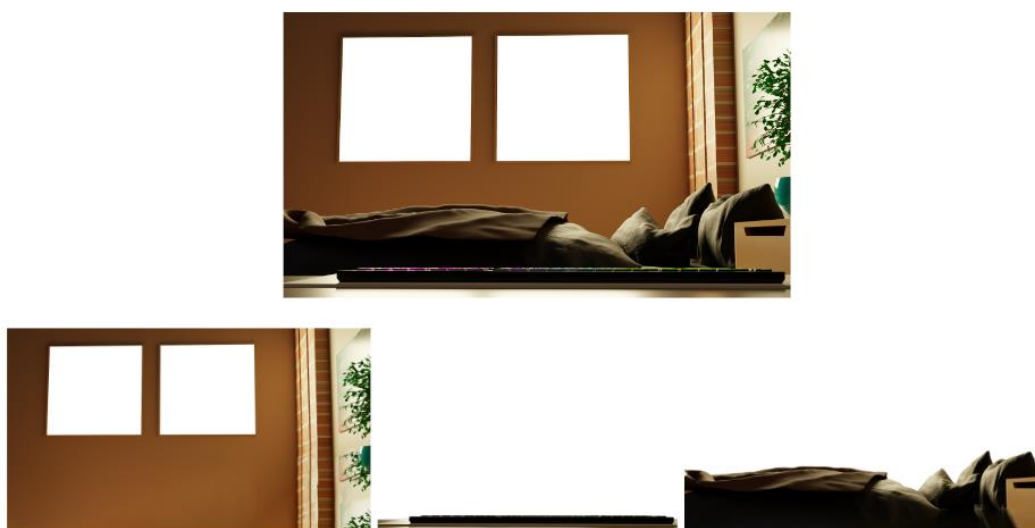


Figure 5 Backgrounds Separate to Background, Foreground, and Middle Ground

3D modelling and animation

Both the modelling and animation were done in Blender. For the modelling process, the modeller used several references and various techniques to create the character's base model, hair, clothes, and other details. When it came to texturing the face, special attention was given to bring out its expressive qualities. Figure 6 shows Character 2 (Iman 3D) and Character 3 (Interviewer) of the final 3D model. Subsequently, the modeller also inserted extensive details when creating the environments and ensured that all texture and lights fit the overall scene. Figure 7 shows the 3D environments that had been rendered.

Meanwhile, for 3D animation, the animator ensured to bring the character to life through movements, expressions, and actions. The result was an impressive 3D animation that captivated viewers, showcasing the fusion of creativity and technology in visual storytelling.

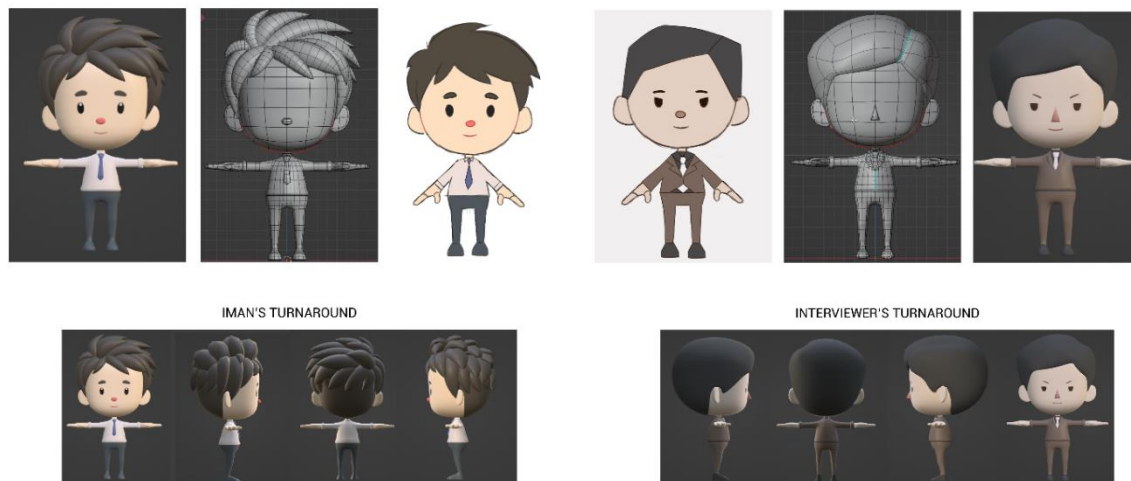


Figure 6 Character 2 (Iman 3D) and Character 3 (Interviewer) of the Final 3D Model

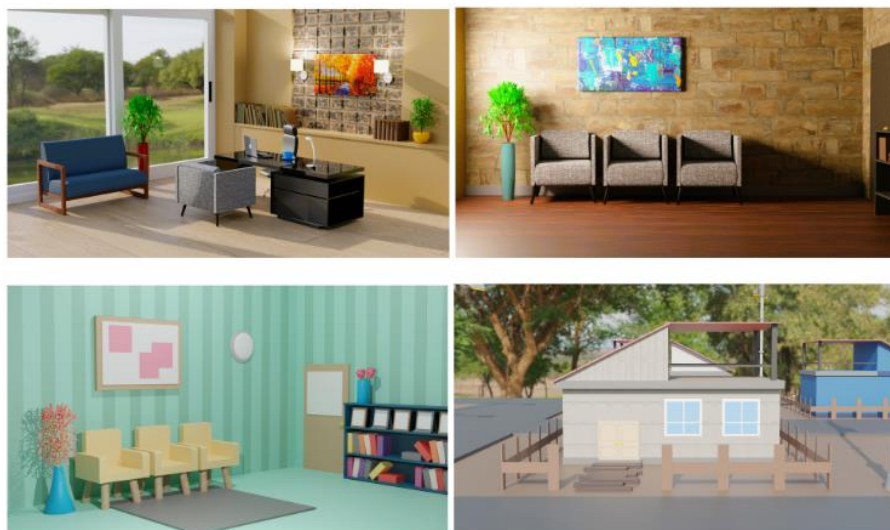


Figure 7 3D Environments in Hire Me!

Post-production

In post-production, the 3D rendering process utilised Blender's cycles engine to generate high-quality, full HD visuals. This was achieved using a powerful graphics-performance laptop. On the other hand, video editing involved combining various scenes from 2D animations, 3D animations, and motion graphics into a connected storyline, following the storyboard as a guide. The Adobe Premiere Pro software was used for this video editing task, which involved compiling the scenes into three separate videos. During the compilation process, it was essential to add appropriate sound effects and background music.

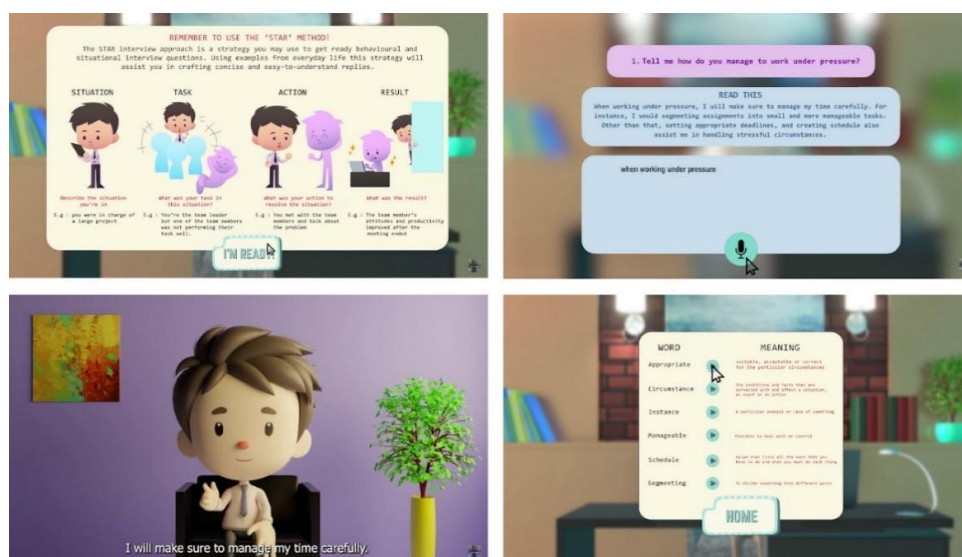


Figure 8 Final Visual Presentation for HIRE ME!

The interviewer will first ask questions and the player will be guided by a UI through every step of the gameplay. The player is then instructed to use the speech recognition feature when answering the questions. After the session ends, there will be a section containing the terms that are challenging for most individuals to pronounce. Apart from that, it also provides the meaning for every word, which is generated from the Oxford Dictionary.

Findings

An interview was conducted with a professor from the Centre for Language Studies at UTHM, where the survey was disseminated to the target audience. The professor and participants were requested to evaluate the research as a whole and provide their responses, as elucidated below.

Interview result with Prof. Madya Siti Noor Fazelah Binti Mohd Noor (Centre for Language Studies at UTHM)

According to the interview, the abovementioned Prof. Madya highlighted that vocabulary is imperative in effective English communication. In other words, it is deemed acceptable, as long as the learner is able to convey their message across. Furthermore, the professor highlighted that the important element in speaking English is the ability to produce sentences in an instant. Learners need to think fast to construct a sentence when conversing. Moreover, the professor mentioned that confidence is essential when communicating in English, and the

professor agreed that most UTHM students struggle in speaking the language because of lack of practice, vocabulary, and fear of judgement. Prof. Madya also added that in job interviews, confidence plays a huge role, since employers normally seek for candidates that are approachable. Finally, the professor agreed that games can become a teaching aid to help students in learning.

Questionnaire to design an informative and appealing interactive simulation gaming as a teaching aid.

According to the responses received through the Google Forms, there were a total of 69 participants comprising 26 males and 43 females. Among the participants, the majority race is Malay (73.9%), and the majority respondents are from the Centre for Diploma Studies (CeDS).

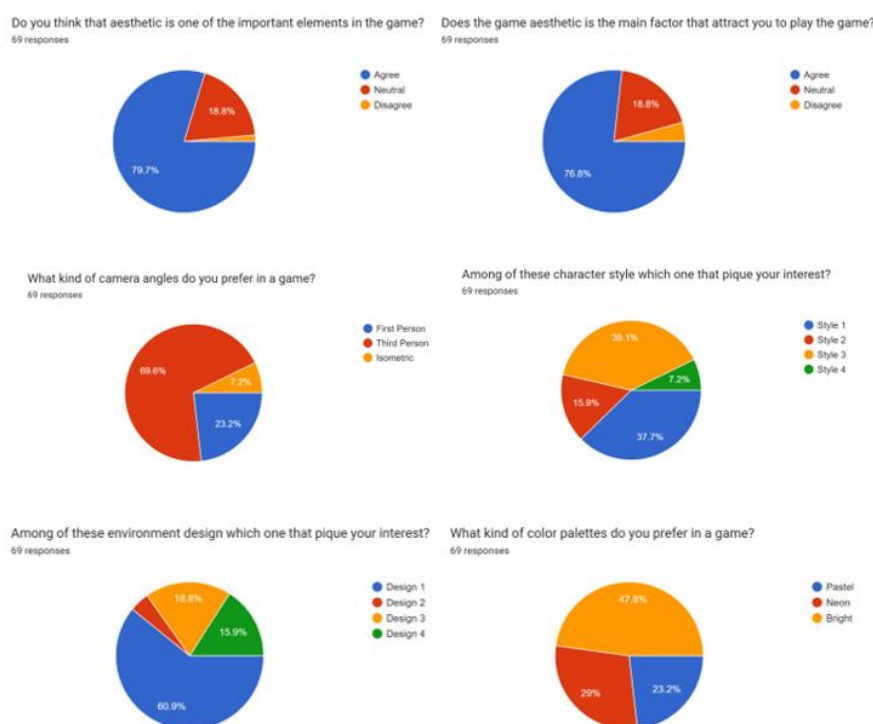


Figure 9 Responses Regrading the Design of the Game

The survey features close-ended questions with multiple choices, revealing a consensus among respondents on the significance of aesthetics as a key factor that initially drew them to engage with the game. The feedback received regarding both designs and

gameplay serves as a valuable foundation for envisioning the final product, aiming to craft an engaging and visually appealing game tailored for university students.

Questionnaire to verify the effectiveness of interactive simulation gaming in enhancing English speaking abilities.

According to the responses received through the Google Forms, there were a total of 50 participants comprising 26 females and 24 males. Among the participants, 30 of them were within the age range of 18–20, while 10 were between the ages of 21–25, and 2 were 26 years old or older. Majority respondents are from the Centre for Diploma Studies (CeDS).

Design and Visual Appearance of the product

In this section, participants were tasked with providing ratings for various aspects of the design and visual appearance of the product. The questions began with the prompt, “How would you rate the...?” and utilised the linear scale method. The respondents must rate from 1 to 5; the result is shown in Figure 10.

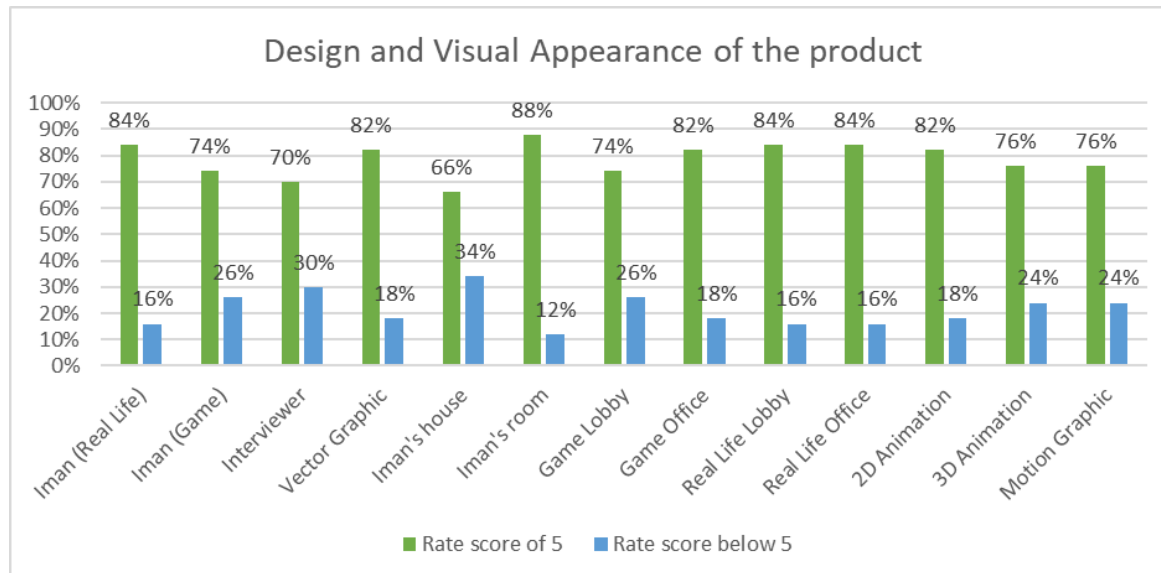


Figure 10 Design and Visual Appearance of the Product

The cumulative rating score for an overall rating of 5 ranges between 66% and 88%, resulting in an average satisfaction rate of approximately 78%. This indicates that the respondents expressed satisfaction with the design and visual appearance of the product. The highest-rated design was Iman's room, while the lowest-rated design was Iman's house.

These scores demonstrate that it is evident that the environment's design is inconsistent and should be noted for visual and user satisfaction improvement in the future. However, overall, the result shows that the respondents are satisfied with the design and visual of the game.

User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX)

UI stands for User Interface, which refers to the visual and interactive elements of a software application, website, or system that allow users to interact with and control it. Examples of UI are buttons, menus, icons, text fields, and graphical elements.

Meanwhile, User Experience (UX) is a term that encompasses the complete user journey and their overall experience when engaging with a product, system, or service. It considers the emotions, perceptions, and responses that users encounter throughout their interaction with the specific product. In this section, the respondent will evaluate the UI and UX of the game; the result is shown in Figure 11.

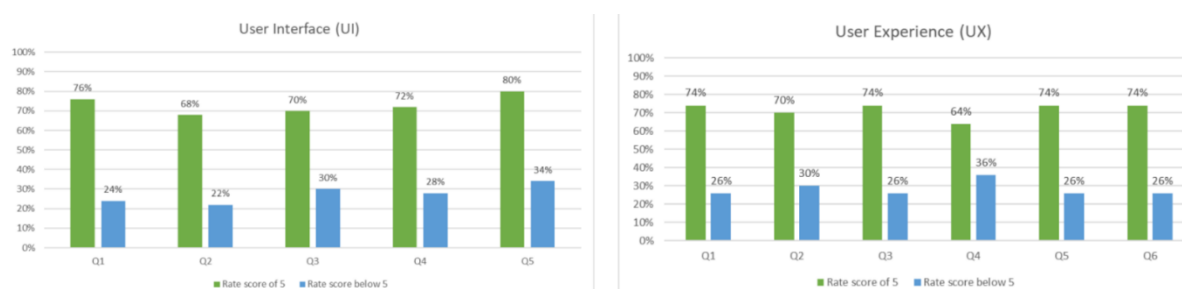


Figure 11 User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX)

Based on the rating scale for User Interface (UI), the overall score of 5 ranges from approximately 68% to 80%, resulting in an average satisfaction rate of around 73.2%. This indicates that the respondents are satisfied with the design and visual appearance of the product. Among the UI questions, Q5, which is about the overall design of the speech recognition part received the highest rating, while Q2 obtained the slightly lower rating. Q2 highlights the arrangement of buttons and text, and according to the response, the game can be improvising the layout of the text and the design of the buttons.

Moving on, based on the rating scale, the overall score of 5 ranges from approximately 64% to 74%, resulting in an average satisfaction rate of around 71.6%. This

indicates that the respondents expressed contentment with the UX of the game. Q1, Q3, Q5, and Q6 receive the same percentage while Q4 receives the lowest percentage, which is “Did you find the speech recognition feature easy to understand?” By this response, the game can be improved in terms of the speech recognition part and try to convey a clear instruction regarding speech recognition. But overall, respondents are both satisfied with the UI and have good User Experience in the game.

Discussion

The findings of this research offer valuable insights into the fundamental aspects of English language learning and provide opportunities for further improvement and refinement of the educational game.

Conducting thorough research to gain a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of English-speaking and the language-related issues among university students, I interviewed Prof. Madya Siti Noor Fazelah Binti Mohd Noor from the Centre for Language Studies at UTHM. The interview covered various aspects, including the definition of English fundamentals, challenges related to students' English-speaking skills, and the difficulties encountered during job interviews for the project. Prof. Madya emphasised that vocabulary is the cornerstone of English communication, emphasizing that as long as learners can convey their message effectively, it is acceptable. Additionally, the importance of being able to produce sentences instantly in conversations was highlighted, stressing the need for quick thinking when constructing sentences. Confidence emerged as a crucial element in English communication, and the professor acknowledged that many UTHM students struggle due to a lack of practice, vocabulary, and fear of judgment. Prof. Madya also noted the significance of confidence in job interviews, as employers typically seek approachable candidates. Finally, the professor agreed that using games as a teaching aid could be beneficial in assisting students' learning.

Conducting research on effective tools for English language learning involved exploring various well-established English-speaking apps that have undergone continuous development. Throughout this investigation, various apps like Cake, Rosetta Stone Reflex, Plato.io, and Dialog Flow were examined for their concepts similar to HIRE ME! and served

as valuable references for game development. A thorough evaluation of these apps included analysing their features, advantages, and drawbacks to provide a comprehensive review. Notably, many of these projects incorporated speech recognition as a common feature for creating English-speaking apps. Drawing inspiration from *Cake*, the game design incorporated a simple and user-friendly interface. Additionally, the real-life one-on-one conversation practice concept from *Rosetta Stone Reflex* played a crucial role in influencing the development of the game. Emphasizing immersive language usage through video scenarios of conversational situations, the app aimed to enhance practical language skills. Despite the simplicity of these apps' interfaces, mastering the complex mechanisms and technical skills necessary for delivering a flawless game.

Following the distribution of surveys and a meticulous analysis of student responses, a comprehensive understanding of student preferences regarding various aspects of the game was obtained. Armed with these valuable insights, the game was meticulously designed to align perfectly with the preferences and tastes of university students. The Google Form survey attracted a total of 69 participants, comprising 26 males and 43 females. The majority of participants identified as Malay (73.9%), and most respondents were from the Centre for Diploma Studies (CeDS). The survey primarily featured close-ended and multiple-choice formats. Overall, respondents concurred that aesthetics played a crucial role in the game, serving as the main factor attracting them to play. By leveraging the feedback received on designs and gameplay, essential input was gained to visualise the final product, ensuring the creation of an appealing and captivating game tailored for university students.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by (Octavianita et al., 2022) and (Chotimah, 2022), both of whom reported positive outcomes related to the effectiveness of utilizing games for improving English speaking skills. The use of games as educational tools provides various benefits for students, such as heightened confidence and proficiency in public speaking, as well as increased interest and motivation in learning English. These consistent findings reinforce the notion that games can serve as a valuable medium for enhancing English-speaking skills among university students. Additionally, the research indicates that students thoroughly enjoyed the concept and experience of employing a real-life conversation approach through the game to practice

English speaking. This discovery is in line with the study by Muhammad et al. (2020), emphasizing the effectiveness of incorporating English conversation practice in improving language skills. The inclusion of real-life scenarios in the game contributed to a more enjoyable and engaging learning process, simulating an environment resembling one-on-one conversation. However, it is crucial to note that, while students responded positively to the game, there is potential for improvement in terms of dialogue improvisation and the integration of more challenging questions.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations associated with the data sources used. First, the reliance on data provided by a single professor from the Centre for Language Studies at UTHM to assess the fundamentals and issues of English speaking. While the professor's expertise and experience are undoubtedly valuable, the perspectives may not fully represent the diverse range of challenges faced by students. Additionally, the effectiveness and design of the game were evaluated based on student feedback, which introduces the potential for subjective biases and varied interpretations. Future studies could benefit from incorporating a more diverse sample of professors and utilising multiple data sources, such as direct observation or objective performance measures, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues and the game's impact in enhancing English speaking among university students. Despite these limitations, the overall perception of the game by students remains positive, underscoring its potential as an effective tool for English language learning.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the successful and impactful development of Hire Me!: Interactive simulation game as an aid for enhancing English speaking is evident. Various challenges associated with designing an engaging and immersive game environment, incorporating realistic dialogue, and creating authentic scenarios were encountered and resolved throughout the research. The prototype of this innovative teaching tool not only highlights the potential of interactive simulation games in language learning but also achieves the set objectives of this research with excellence.

Hire Me! exhibits significant potential for widespread market adoption, thanks to its innovative approach and user-friendly interface. The game's immersive and highly realistic

environment captivates learners, fostering sustained engagement and motivation for practicing and refining their English communication skills. The aspiration is that this game will not only elevate learners' English-speaking abilities but also inspire a broader audience to embark on the journey of learning the English language, contributing to cultural understanding, and empowering individuals to communicate confidently in English. Future studies might concentrate on refining the game's aesthetics and overall visual appeal, aiming to create a more immersive and captivating gaming experience. This could involve exploring advanced graphics, animations, and interactive elements to enhance the game's visual attractiveness to learners. Additionally, research efforts could be channelled into integrating gamification elements such as rewards, challenges, and interactive leader boards, aiming to further boost motivation and sustain engagement over time.

Numerous enhancements became apparent, aiming to elevate the overall quality and efficiency of the product. Key improvements include the development of a complete game. Due to time constraints, the initial phase only allowed for the creation of a game prototype, accompanied by a demonstration video illustrating the gameplay. To optimise the project's impact, it is essential to embark on further development efforts to transform the prototype into a fully functional and captivating game. This comprehensive approach will offer users a more immersive experience, enhancing the language learning process and maximizing the project's effectiveness.

To enhance the voiceover quality, addressing the current inconsistencies in the tones of AI-generated character voices is crucial. Exploring alternative voiceover options or investing in higher-quality AI voices can significantly improve the user experience, ensuring a more seamless and enjoyable interaction. Consistent and engaging character voices play a pivotal role in enhancing the overall appeal of the game and its effectiveness in supporting English-speaking proficiency. Furthermore, introducing character variety and customisation is recommended. This could involve incorporating a diverse range of characters or allowing players to customise their own avatars, thereby adding depth and creativity to the gaming experience. Allowing users to represent themselves or create unique personas within the game fosters a more personalised and enjoyable learning journey, potentially motivating users to actively participate.

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