



The Attitudes of Students towards Needs and Enhancement Strategies of Video Game Script Writing in English: A Case Study of Information and Communication Technology Program at Mahidol University

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to investigate the attitudes of students towards needs of video game script writing in English, and 2) to construct the enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English. This research was considered survey research conducted at Mahidol University. The respondents were 27 students in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) program at Mahidol University in the academic year 2025. Two research instruments were employed; namely, 1) a questionnaire for investigating the attitudes of students towards needs of video game script writing in English, and 2) a set of questions employed for the focus group discussion meeting for the approval of the constructed enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English. The data and information collected were analyzed through statistical devices and the content analysis method and presented in terms of frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results indicated that: 1) The needs of video game script writing in English were found in the level of high ($\mu=4.01$, $\sigma=0.86$), and 2) The enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English were categorized into three units; namely, Unit 1: the knowledge concerning current situation of video game, Unit 2: the knowledge and skills of the writer concerning video game script writing, and Unit 3: the background knowledge and skills of English writing. The strategies were evaluated and approved by the 3 specialists through the content analysis method. The strategies could be used as guides for the video game script writing in English for the Thai video game script writers.

Keywords: video game script writing, enhancement strategies of video game script writing, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) program at Mahidol University

1. Introduction

Video game writing is the art and craft of writing scripts and narratives for video games. Similar to screenwriting, it is typically a freelance profession. It includes many differences from writing for film, due to the non-linear and interactive nature of most video games, and the necessity to work closely with video game designers and voice actors. There are many differing types of text in video games in comparison to stage shows or movies,

including written text, foreign or made-up languages, and often situation-based information. Especially when developing Triple A games, more than one writer will be required to create the game, split into different roles. The script writer focuses on the dialogue said by characters and the voice over. The script's dialogue can be written in flowcharts to illustrate the various dialogue resulting from both decision and indecision. Generally, a script writer is less involved with the video game's mechanics, and is tasked with writing and working with voice actors. Most video games are in English language because English language is a lingua franca of our world. This is due to the British colonization and the emerging of American business and technology. Most famous video games are translated to a number of languages such as Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, French, German. Video game is useful. It creates both knowledge and entertainment. It can teach us correct grammar like in Final Fantasy VII Rebirth, and it teaches us about life like in Final Fantasy XVI. There are many facts of video game as follow: Nowadays, video game industry become more popular than that of music and film industries; Some 2.4 billion people around the world use a device to play games, and this is increasingly spanning a wider range of generations; Over half (51%) feel favorable about entertainment franchises expanding into gaming; and More and more gamers are also switching between gaming and entertainment content within the same hour.

For these reasons, the researcher is interested in investigating the attitudes of students towards needs and constructing the enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English: a case study of information and communication technology program at Mahidol University. The results from this research will help others know the needs and enhancement strategies of video game script writing.

2. Literature Review

The Concept of Video Game Script Writing

History: Video games were first popularized with Pong. Pong was a simple virtual game of tennis in which, developer Nolan Bushnell said, the primary goal was “fun”. According to Bushnell, games in that era had been so technologically challenging to produce as such, story was not a concern for many developers. Text adventure games such as Colossal Cave Adventure and Zork featured simple fantasy narratives which have been compared to Dungeons & Dragons. In later years, technological advances allowed developers greater options for expressing story in a video game, which led to more expansive and ambitious narratives. Half-Life, released in 1998, made significant innovations in how it presented its narrative, such as its choice to tell its narrative without the use of cutscene cinematics or breaking up its world into levels, and is often credited with having codified many modern storytelling conventions within the medium.

What are video game scripts?: Video game scripts are roadmaps that incorporate dialogue, narratives, player instructions, character details, and storylines for video games. Production teams use these scripts as blueprints when developing character interactions, quests, objectives, level designs, and gameplay mechanics. They also guide voice actors and other creative teams when completing character interactions like conversations or gameplay mechanics like puzzles and combat sequences. For example, the scripting technique in The Last of Us includes detailed game settings about an ‘Outbreak World’ and a touching backstory for Joel and Ellie. This emotional arc makes it one of the best-selling video games worldwide. Video game scripts are excerpts used in video game development to showcase direction notes like character personality and a description of the vocal style, voice over instructions like reading pace, tone, and soundlike vocal styles for reference, and gameplay details like sound effects and visuals.

Video game script format: A video game script format breaks down the details of a video game project, so creatives and voice actors understand which direction to follow during production. It includes: 1) Video game name 2) Target audience 3) Gender and age of the game characters or narrator 4) Direction notes detailing vocal tone and soundlike styles for voice actor reference 5) Gameplay mechanics production teams use to build the game world.

6) A dialogue script sample for voice actors to practice.

How to write a video game script: You can write a video game script by following this six-step process: 1) define your game's concept; 2) build your game world; 3) create the characters; 4) develop the plot; 5) construct your flow; and 6) draft your dialogue. Here's more on each step.

1. Define your game concept: Consider the main idea and genre of your video game. Is it action-adventure with a mix of combat and exploration in open-world environments like Assassin's Creed? Or an RPG (Role-Playing Game) with complex stories, character development, and decision-making like The Elder Scrolls? By defining your idea, you draft a plot that outlines your heroes and villains, time and place, and what players need to do to win.

2. Build your game world: Worldbuilding directly influences the plot, dialogue, and story flow. Start by imagining your game's environment. Is it a post-apocalyptic world like in The Last of Us, or is space your playground like Halo Infinite? Then you're ready to start designing the environment with unique features, like the people or factions your player will encounter.

3. Create the characters: Script the main character's personality and backstory well. Is he a lone ranger like Arthur Morgan or a team player like SAS Captain John Price from Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II? Next, create your supporting characters similarly, developing relationships between the lead character and the rest of the cast, like family or friends. This shapes the game's plot and eventual outcome for players.

4. Develop the plot: Return to your original concept and define the details so players are drawn to your world. You can create a noble quest like in the Elder Scrolls, where elite warriors fight to protect the innocent in their villages. Or where players have a mission to save the world, like Mortal Kombat 11. So script the major story first, then add challenges or side quests.

5. Construct the flow: The game's outcome depends on the player's choices, which all dictate player flow. Once you've scripted your main story, add options that branch out into new storylines. That way, you have an outcome ready for the player's decision.

6. Draft the dialog: Video game scripts use dialogue between characters, like in God of War Ragnarök, where the moving script between the main character, Kratos, and his son won the Video Game Award for Best Performance (vocal). Keep your dialogue honest, heartfelt, and relatable to create an immersive player experience. And to find the best voice for your video game script.

Video game scripts provide a foundation for compelling game narratives, realistic characters, and immersive virtual worlds. In addition, to write a persuasive game script that draws in gamers, first identify your concept, build a unique world, create relatable characters, develop the plot and flow, and write heartfelt dialogue. (Voice123, 2025).

So What Do Game Writers Actually Write?

Flow Charts - Games these days are very complex — the RPGs (role-playing games) especially. The players will have to make many decisions throughout the game. Thus, the game is going to have to develop every possible option that allows the gamer to feel like they are really controlling a character organically within that world. A flow chart reads much like an extreme version of those old Choose Your Own Adventure books. It sounds interesting, but it's highly technical with barebones story and character development — just enough to keep it interesting for the gamer.

Side Quests - Many games have smaller missions and quests that the characters can embark on. These need to be written as well.

Character descriptions and biographies - Every character has to have a description and breakdown so that game designers can properly develop them together, as far as who these characters are, what they look like, and what they are capable of.

NPC (non-player characters) dialogue scenes - Gamers and the characters they control will interact with non-player characters throughout the flowchart of the game. The dialogue needs to be written for these many moments.

Cutscenes - Cutscenes are cinematic scenes or sequences that are usually found before, during, and after the gameplay. Within the game, they are used to push the story forward after the gamer has achieved certain goals.

Final Storyboard Script - If there's anything that is similar to a feature film screenplay within the video game development process, it's the storyboard script. This is written after everything mentioned above has been completed. Consider this to be the master storyboard that documents the gameplay and story elements from beginning to end.

Video game writing is a unique position and skill. And the point of this post was first to debunk the fantasy that screenwriters often have when it comes to writing for video games — that they can conceptualize their own stories, characters, and concepts and sell them to the video game industry, much like they would try to sell spec scripts to movie studios. And even beyond the spec myth, it's clear that being a game writer is an entirely different ball game with the full focus on game design and gameplay, rather than story and character narratives. Yes, video games now have more depth in that respect, but, in the end, they aren't movies or television episodes. They're video games augmented by story and character. (Ken Miyamoto, 2021)

What does a video game writer do?: A game writer is responsible for creating, writing, and revising in-game dialogue, audio logs, journal entries, item descriptions, UI text, and just about everything the player is going to hear or read in the game. They work in tandem with other writers and types of game designers and developers to shape characters, quests, cinematics, and the overall narrative spine of the game. Writers are also responsible for: 1) Getting their stuff in on time 2) Pitching stories and characters 3) Breaking down story elements 4) Overseeing narrative revisions 5) Getting their stuff ready for voice recording 6) Overseeing the voice recording 7) Staying on top of the constant iteration process during the game's development.

Above all else, a game writer gives the player context and clarity for their actions such as: 1) Who are they in this game world? 2) What's their story (and why should we care)? 3) What's the game's setting? 4) Informing the player where to go next and why 5) What's the task before them? 6) What obstacles might be in the way? 7) And what's the prize at the end they are struggling to get to?

How is game writing different from TV or film writing?: The main difference is how the audience experiences the story and content, which fundamentally impacts the creative process. In TV & film, the audience passively observes the story unfolding, which means TV and film writers aim to plot their shots to visually inform the audience. In video games, the players (also known as the audience) actively participate as the main character to unfold the story, which means the game writers must guide the player on where to look and go, all while giving context for their actions.

This is a larger studio effort to pull off, but if done right, the players will feel like they figured out the directions naturally and intuitively. To accomplish this, game writers need to: 1) Think through the player's actions and what needs to be conveyed at all times 2) Find a way to focus the players' eyes on something important (preferably) without cutscenes 3) Account for everything the player will do, especially if they veer off the intended path

Differences aside, there is a lot of overlap between the two, especially since games have been adopting film/TV storytelling techniques for years. Writers' rooms are common in game studios, which gaming also adopted from TV and film. Game writers are learning screenplay writing structures more and more, especially on big, cinematic titles. In some cases, screenplay formats were a "common language" for informing the visuals of a scene (for the cinematics team) as well as how the VO (Voice Over) talent (already familiar with scripts in general) should read the line.

So, what skills does an entry-level game writer need?: Every studio is unique when it comes to what they look for in an entry-level/junior writer, but there are a few common traits: 1) Excellent spelling and grammar skills 2) The ability to write tight, write unique voices, and write fast 3) Fluency in the native language of the studio 4) Knowing the studio and their games 5) Getting along with a team of people 6) Being able to take direction and criticism 7) Being able to not flinch when your stuff gets cut from the game 8) Contributing constructively to a writers' room environment 9) Knowing one of the following: Word, Excel, Google Workspace, Final Draft, Twine or being a fast learner of whatever tool the studio uses. Knowledge of Unity or Unreal wouldn't hurt. 10) Excellent time management skills to hit deadlines 11) Staying cool in high-stress environments 12) Staying up to date on narrative trends in games, especially in the genre you are writing in. (John Ryan, 2025)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population

The population in this research project were 27 students in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) program of Mahidol University.

3.2 Research Instruments

In this research project, there are two major research instruments; namely, 1) questionnaire was employed for the data collection of investigation of needs of video game script writing in English. All items in the questionnaire were evaluated for the correctness and suitability in terms of IOC, which were found in the range from 0.66 – 1.00. Moreover, the questionnaire was tried out in the group of 25 students, which was found possessing the reliability in terms of Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.66. This means the questionnaire was qualified as a research instrument. 2) A set of questions for the focus group discussion meeting of the 3 specialists for the approval of the strategies.

3.3 Data Collection

1) For the investigation of the needs, the questionnaire was distributed to the 27 respondents by the researcher herself for the data collection of investigation of needs of video game script writing in English. The letter requesting permission to collect the data was submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology at Mahidol University before collecting the data from the respondents

2) For the approval of the strategies, the focus group discussion meeting of the 3 specialists was set up to collect comments towards the correctness and suitability of the strategies.

3.4 Data Analysis

1) For the investigation of the needs, the data and information collected were analyzed, interpreted and then presented in terms of frequency count, percentage, mean (μ), standard deviation (σ). The Five Point Likert Rating Scale was used to evaluate the respondents' needs and their strategies of video game script writing in English. The criteria and definition at the range of the mean scores as follows:

4.21-5.00 = the highest level of needs

- 3.41-4.20 = the high level of needs
2.61-3.40 = the moderate level of needs
1.81-2.60 = the low level of needs
1.00-1.80 = the lowest level of needs

2) For the approval of the strategies, the collected comments towards the correctness and suitability of the strategies from the three specialists were analyzed. For the evaluation and approval through the content analysis method.

4. Results

Part 1 General information

Students

Table 4.1: General information of students

General Information		Total(N)=27	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	74.07
	Female	7	25.93
	Total	27	100
Ages	15-20	2	7.41
	21-25	25	92.59
	Total	27	100
Education	Bachelor's degree	27	100
	Total	27	100
Hours of playing video game	1-3 hours/day	7	25.93
	4-6 hours/day	10	37.04
	7-9 hours/day	3	11.11
	10-12 hours/day	1	3.70
	13-15 hours/day	1	3.70
	16-18 hours/day	1	3.70
	Not indicate	4	14.82
Total		27	100

According to table 4.1, there are 7 female students (25.93%) and 20 male students (74.07%). There are 2 students who are in the age between 15-20 (7.41%) and the rest or 25 students are in between 21-25 (92.59%). The population has or is studying bachelor's degree. There are 7 students who play video game 1-3 hours/day (25.93%), 10 students who play video game 4-6 hours/day (37.04%), 3 students who play video game 7-9 hours/day (11.11%), 1 student who plays video game 10-12 hours/day (3.70%), 1 student who plays video game 10-12 hours/day (3.70%), 1 student who plays video game 13-15 hours/day (3.70%), 1 student who plays video game 16-18 hours/day (3.70%) and there are 4 students who didn't indicate (14.82%).

Part 2 Needs of video game script writing in English

Table 4.2: Needs of video game script writing in English

Items	N=27		Level of needs
	μ	σ	
1. You praise English video game stories.	4.41	0.84	Highest

2. You like English video games that give instruction.	4	0.78	High
3. You like English video games that guide you on where to look and go.	3.63	0.97	High
4. You want English video games to give directions of where to go next.	3.48	1.01	High
5. You like English video game that uses your brain or logic.	4.37	0.69	Highest
6. Players should feel productive since productive English video games influence the video games to be interesting.	4.07	0.92	High
7. The steps that define progress must be clear so video game script writers know how to write English video game stories progressively.	4.26	0.76	Highest
8. Gameplay elements should introduce sequentially and logically in English video game.	4.30	0.91	Highest
9. English video game players should see tangible results for their invested time.	4.41	0.75	Highest
10. You want the carrot-and-stick technique in completing an English video game.	3.19	1.00	Moderate
Total	4.01	0.86	High

According to table 4.2, the needs of video game script writing in English were found in the level of high ($\mu=4.01$, $\sigma=0.86$)

Part 3 Enhancement Strategies of video game script writing in English

According to table 4.3, the constructed enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English are composed of 3 units; namely. Unit 1: the knowledge concerning current situation of video game, Unit 2: the knowledge and skills of the writer concerning video game script writing, and Unit 3: the background knowledge and skills of English writing. The strategies were evaluated and approved by the 3 specialists through the content analysis method. The strategies could be used as guides for the video game script writing in English for the Thai video game script writers.

Table 4.3: The 3 units of the constructed Enhancement Strategies of Video Game Script Writing in English

Topics/Contents
Unit 1: The knowledge concerning current situation of video game
1. Current video game market.
2. Popularity in video game playing.
Unit 2: The knowledge and skills of the writer concerning video game script writing
1. Background knowledge of the video game script writer.
2. Skill of video game script writing.
Unit 3: The background knowledge and skills of English writing
1. English grammar usage.
2. Vocabulary in the field of video game.

5. Conclusion

Video game is dynamic. There is no an exact answer for a video game because different players have different opinions regard to their cultures, how they grow up, their environment and generation etc. Video game has its own language, which in wherever, it still conveys the same message and tone that arouse players to excite and enjoy. Players consider video game as another way of relaxation as well as entertainment. Video game's story is considered as an entertainment that they feel comfortable to enjoy for players. Players play video games not because of their curiosity in learning language like English but they want to entertain themselves by choosing their own activity on their own judgment. Players see video games as a lively novel that has tone and voice that arouse and response to their own subconscious. Playing video game is not like reading novels or watching movies or television because reading novels or watching movies or television are one-way communication while playing video game is a sort of two-way communication that players can interact and control the direction of the story depends on their own decisions.

6. Discussion

1) The results from the research indicated that students rated the needs of video game script writing in English were found in the level of high ($\mu=4.01$, $\sigma=0.86$). Video games should have stories. It helps to make the video games more interesting. Video games' instruction is important in that it helps video game players to be able to start the story and also helps instruct the players how to play the games. Video games' instruction should be easy to understand because it is a guideline to play the whole video game. An English video game that guides you on where to look and go helps you progress the story so the language must be easy. Guideline about direction of where to go next is also important because it helps progress the video game's story. An English video game that uses your brain or logic practices logic and endurance such as in "Hogwarts Legacy". Hogwarts Legacy has a lot of puzzles. Players should feel productive since productive English video games influence the video games to be interesting therefore video game script writers should use productive words. The steps that define progress must be clear so the video game script writers know how to write English video game stories progressively. Gameplay elements should introduce sequentially and logically in an English video game so video game script writers have to be reasonable. English video game's players should see tangible results for their invested time such as the feelings of content when they win so video game script writers must use words wisely. Most video games use carrot-and-stick technique in completing the video games but it seems like this technique makes some players think that they are fool especially when we put it into words.

2) The constructed enhancement strategies of video game script writing in English are composed of 3 units; namely, Unit 1: the knowledge concerning current situation of video game, Unit 2: the knowledge and skills of the writer concerning video game script writing, and Unit 3: the background knowledge and skills of English writing. The strategies were evaluated and approved by the 3 specialists through the content analysis method. The strategies could be used as guides for the video game script writing in English for the Thai video game script writers. The findings were found corresponding to Sukanya Buranadechachai, Warattawan Chairat, Nuttida Kumprasrt (2024) in that "Japanese Cultural Communication in Role-Playing Games from China" involves analyzing role-playing video games from Chinese developers that communicate Japanese culture through characters, key content, and the essence of the storyline or video game script writing. This includes incorporating Japanese culture elements such as legends, attire, and the lifestyle of Japanese people as central themes in the content, following theoretical frameworks related to cultural diffusion theory, cultural transmission theory,

language-focused communication theory, and semiotic communication theory. The characteristics and patterns of Japanese cultural communication in various aspects through role-playing video games from China span across 13 dimensions, referencing Japanese culture concepts. The portrayal of Japanese culture through these games is intricately woven into the ten important components of video games, referencing narrative storytelling theory with Chinese game developers making efforts to communicate Japanese culture positively through elements such as costumes, language, food, and even lifestyle. The artistry and intricacy of Japanese culture presented to players are crafted to immerse and entertain them. Additionally, the overall portrayal of Japanese NPC (non-player characters) traits in *Naraka: Bladepoint* by Tencent, *Onmyoji* by NetEase Games, and *Genshin Impact* by Hoyoverse, these three games indicate a positive view of Japanese culture by Chinese game developers, despite historical tensions between the two nations. The research suggests that Chinese individuals, or at least Chinese video game developers, do not let past conflicts influence the significant role of Japanese culture in their communication efforts. Instead, they showcase a global admiration for Japanese culture through their video games, reaching audiences worldwide and not limited to any specific country. The popularity of these games further confirms the success of communicating Japanese culture from the perspective of these Chinese game developers, demonstrating the broad impact of their cultural communication efforts.

Great story always impacts because it gives meaning to the story. When we use our knowledge we will be proud of ourselves and we will enjoy it. In English video games, they have this too. A great example of this type of game is “Astral Chain”. Astral Chain uses English language to inspect the crime scene. It is boring if we don’t have any challenge. That means English video games are not fun when you’re always winning at everything because they’re boring or routine. At the same time English video games are not fun when you are losing at everything because they are frustrating. In conclusion, English video games are fun when you are winning only some of the time at some of the things. Story is important because it helps retaining player’s interest. It would be interesting that an English video game’s story is delivered in many of ways e.g. cutscenes, environmental storytelling, in-game text entries such as journal entries, correspondences and audio recordings because it has a variety. English video game progression should increase variety, power, and challenge so video game script writer should build a video game story in a developing way. An example is “Final Fantasy XVI”. Final Fantasy XVI’s gameplay becomes harder and at the same time grants new rewards as the story progresses. Rewards bring satisfaction to players and they eventually help them overcome the final boss. Experience is the most important thing to concern for video game script writers.

7. Suggestions

The usage of the finding, the strategies should be applied by Thai video game script writers into practice. Nowadays, it is found rare to find the handbook for video game script writing in English in Thailand. For further study, the effectiveness of the strategies should be conducted.

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