Chapter 13
A Study of Using VR Game in Teaching Tajweed for Teenagers

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the use of VR games to entertain players while teaching and improving the knowledge of Quran Tajweed for teenagers. Tajweed is an Islamic science that studies the correct recitation of the letters and words in the Qur'an. Teenagers between the ages of thirteen to eighteen were chosen for this research because it has been proven that learning at an early age ensures long-lasting knowledge, and in addition, teenagers are more capable of controlling and modifying their pronunciation. As teenagers nowadays are exposed to a variety of game technologies and their expectations and satisfaction levels are particularly high, a 3D VR game was introduced as an attractive modern solution. Viewed on HTC Vive, a 3D VR game prototype consisting of two levels was developed and evaluated by 20 teenage participants. The evaluation session resulted in a positive outcome with a few suggestions for future modifications.

INTRODUCTION

The game development world has expanded greatly during the last few decades and has covered a wide variety of areas. Entertaining is indeed one of the most important values that are provided through games. However, spending too much time playing games that reward the player nothing but entertainment leaves a negative impact on the player's mental health. Since this attitude is noticed to be common among teenagers, adding some learning outcome to the games would help in enriching the player's knowledge and hence, making a better use of his time.

The content of the produced game was chosen to be the science of Tajweed. Tajweed is an Islamic science that is related to the Glorious Qur'an. It is defined as "articulating every letter from its articulation point and giving the letter its rights and dues of characteristics." In other words, it is a betterment of the pronunciation of Arabic letters when reciting Qur'an. Following are some key points about Tajweed and its importance that motivated the authors to target it. First of all, Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims and it contains the words of Allah which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (PBUH). It is the primary source for the Muslims' faith and practice. Due to that, it is very important to prevent it from being altered or read mistakenly. After the spread of Islam, Arabs were mixing with non-Arab and the Arab tongue was vulnerable to becoming corrupted with this intermixing. Therefore, the rules of Tajweed were put to guard and preserve the Qur'an from being distorted, and to ensure that it is being read exactly as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Not following these rules may lead to changes in the meaning which is not acceptable. In fact, every Muslim has to recite Qur'an at least while praying (which is done 5 times per day). In addition, there are plenty of verses that state the importance of reciting Qur'an properly (i.e. with Tajweed) and the great reward that people get when they do so. Because of the previously mentioned points, many people have the willingness to learn it. However, some of them get discouraged because of the difficulties that are faced while learning it. Being more specific, not only must a Tajweed learner know the articulation points of the letters and their characteristics, but he also must understand what rules change in the letters due to the order of letters.

To give an example, the letter "ن" pronounced as "Noon" (similar to 'N' in English) is read differently depending on the situation. In the general case, the "ن" / "Noon" letter is pronounced normally, but in some cases, the letter is pronounced differently. More specifically, when it's followed with a specific set of letters, it becomes hidden and its articulation point changes to near the articulation point of the letter that is following it (this rule is known as Ikhfaa إخفاء). In addition, if the "ن" / "Noon" is followed with another set of letters, it becomes merged into the letter immediately following it and its articulation point changes to the articulation point of the letter it is merged with (this rule is known as Idgham إدغام). The above overview aims to give the reader a better understanding of the nature of this science and to elaborate on the reasons that encouraged the authors of this research to target this tough and critical science through this game.

The existing applications that are based on Tajweed hold no appeal towards teenagers because they are found to be purely educational. Others may include some gaming, but they are usually of a low quality and don't provide the user with the desired level of interactivity. In general, they are not as attractive as other popular games are. This reduces their popularity among youths. Therefore, *Qee* - a Virtual Reality (VR) in 3D environment game is proposed to serve as a solution. *Qee* is an Arabic word that means the imperative verb of protection. This name conveys the main task in the game which requires the user to protect himself from the devil. This is done through achieving several tasks in each level (explained in detail throughout the chapter).

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