CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Mobile game is a video game played on a feature phone, smartphone, smartwatch, PDA, tablet computer, portable media player, or calculator (Deterding et al., 2011). The earliest known game on a mobile phone was a Tetris variant on the Hagenuk MT-2000 device from 1994 (Albinus, 2014). In 1997, Nokia launched the very successful Snake. Snake (and its variants), which was preinstalled in most mobile devices manufactured by Nokia, has since become one of the most played video games and is found on more than 350 million devices worldwide (Gero, 2019). A variant of the Snake game for the Nokia 6110, using the infrared port, was also the first two-player game for mobile phones (Albinus, 2014).

Adventure game refers to a type of interactive digital entertainment designed specifically for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. Unlike traditional video games played on gaming consoles or personal computers, mobile adventure games are tailored to cater to the portability and touchscreen capabilities of mobile devices. These games often provide players with an engaging and immersive experience, blending elements of storytelling, exploration, puzzle-solving, and character development (Computer Hope, 2023)

The primary goal of a mobile adventure game is to take players on a captivating journey through a fictional world or narrative, where they assume the role of a protagonist or a group of characters. Players are tasked with navigating through various environments, encountering challenges, and progressing through the game's storyline by overcoming obstacles and solving intricate puzzles.

Historical video games certainly qualify as a medium that can do history, that can communicate aspects of the past. To use a more formal term, historical video games are a form of public history. For the purposes of this piece, researcher define public history as any historical communication created outside of formal academia with little or no assistance from academic historians. This includes games whose designers read published histories and even games where an academic historian was on board as a consultant but did not make the driving decisions in the design process (McCall, 2018). Fate/Grand Order is a popular mobile game that incorporates elements of history, mythology, and fantasy. While it draws inspiration

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from real historical figures and events, it presents an alternate timeline and fictionalized versions of these characters. The game reimagines historical figures as heroic spirits summoned to participate in the Holy Grail War and engage in battles across different eras and settings (Type MOON, 2017).

Social semiotics is concerned with meaning makers and meaning making. It studies the media of dissemination and the modes of communication that people use and develop to represent their understanding of the world and to shape power relations with others (Kress, Hodge, & van Leeuwen, 2015). It draws on qualitative, fine-grained analysis of records of meaning making, such as 'artifacts', 'texts', and 'transcripts', to examine the production and dissemination of discourse across the variety of social and cultural contexts within which meaning is made. Different 'versions' of social semiotics have emerged since the publication of Michael Halliday's Language as Social Semiotic in 1978. The account writer's offer in this paper is focused on the version proposed by Gunther Kress, Robert Hodge, Theo van Leeuwen, and others (Kress et al., 2015). Following a historical overview, we discuss its connections with Pragmatics and other approaches; key concepts; analytical focus; and fields of application.

Social semiotics in the realm of mobile games investigates the generation and transmission of meaning through various signs and symbols within the game environment. It examines the interplay between these signs, the cultural and social contexts in which they are situated, and how players interpret and engage with them. Visual, auditory, and textual signs are explored in mobile games to convey meaning and elicit specific player responses. These signs encompass icons, symbols, text, images, sounds, and game mechanics, which are designed based on cultural conventions, user expectations, and game objectives. The visual sign systems in mobile games involve meticulously crafted visual elements such as character designs, user interfaces, and environmental graphics that communicate information, emotions, and narrative aspects. Textual sign systems utilize language, writing style, and tone to influence players' perceptions of the game world, characters, and events. The interactive aspect of gameplay is also analyzed, where game mechanics, controls, and feedback systems guide players' actions, communicate goals, and create a sense of achievement. Social semiotics in mobile games offers a framework for comprehending how meaning is constructed and transmitted through visual, textual,

and interactive signs, taking into account the impact of cultural, social, and contextual factors on player interpretations and engagement (Jørgensen, K. 2008).

The Grammar of Visual Design, developed by Theo van Leeuwen, is a theoretical framework that explores the principles and structures underlying visual communication. It provides a systematic approach to understanding how visual texts are constructed and how meaning is conveyed through their composition. Van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design is rooted in the field of social semiotics, which investigates how signs and symbols create meaning within specific social and cultural contexts. It recognizes that visual communication involves various modes, including visual, spatial, linguistic, and gestural elements, which work together to construct messages. The Grammar of Visual Design introduces a set of principles and rules that govern the organization and arrangement of visual elements. These principles include framing, modality, salience, connectivity, and compositional structure, etc. Framing involves the spatial boundaries of an image and determines what is included or excluded. Modality refers to the stylistic choices made in representing objects, people, and events. Salience addresses the emphasis placed on specific elements to guide viewer attention. Connectivity examines the relationships and connections between visual elements. Compositional structure refers to the overall organization and arrangement of elements within the image. By analyzing these principles and their application in visual texts across various domains, such as advertising, news media, and fine art, the Grammar of Visual Design provides a framework for understanding how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and influenced by cultural, social, and ideological factors. (Leeuwen, 2006).

There are previous studies conducted using social semiotics in video games. Pérez-Latorre, Ó., Oliva, M., & Besalú, R. (2016). The presented case study served as an analytical example to demonstrate the application of the proposed analysis model. The authors did not intend to identify general discursive patterns in contemporary video game culture but aimed to provide a methodological tool for similar research projects. While the study focused on social resonances related to the recession, austerity, and neoliberalism in "The Last of Us," the model can be applied to other subjects and social connotations in video games, such as gender representation, race, social class, moral issues, and ethical complexities in gameplay design.

The writer choose *Fate/Grand Order* because *Fate/Grand Order* is a popular mobile game that incorporates elements of history, mythology, and fantasy. While it

draws inspiration from real historical figures and events, it presents an alternate timeline and fictionalized versions of these characters. The game reimagines historical figures as heroic spirits summoned to participate in the Holy Grail War and engage in battles across different eras and settings. Semiotic analysis is a valuable tool used in various fields, including cultural studies, literature, media studies, and even game research like Fate/Grand Order. Semiotic analysis can be applied to gain deeper insights into the game's narrative, characters, visual elements, and overall storytelling. *Fate/Grand Order* is a game rich in symbolism. Characters, objects, and events often carry symbolic meanings that enhance the narrative and add depth to the story. Semiotic analysis helps researchers uncover these symbols and interpret their significance, providing a more profound understanding of the game's themes and messages. Characters in *Fate/Grand Order* are carefully designed with specific visual traits and personalities. Semiotics can help researchers analyze the visual cues, colors, clothing, and gestures of characters, revealing the intended messages behind their creation and how they fit into the larger narrative. Narrative analysis is one of the research methods used in analyzing Fate/Grand Order. It involves the examination and interpretation of the narratives or stories present within the game, as well as how players engage with and experience those narratives.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the visual elements of *Fate/Grand Order* characters and historical figures?

2. What are the narrative elements of *Fate/Grand Order* characters and historical figures?

3. How are the visual and narrative elements used to create a visualization of historical figure *Fate/Grand Order* game?

1.3 Purpose of the study

1. To examine and identify the visual elements present in both Fate/Grand Order characters and historical figures. This includes analyzing their costumes, weapons, accessories, and other visual attributes to understand how they are designed and represented in the game.

2. To explore and analyze the narrative elements associated with Fate/Grand Order characters and historical figures. This involves investigating their backstories, motivations, character arcs, and interactions within the game's storyline to gain insights into their narrative development.

3. To reveal how the visual and narrative elements are used to create a visualization of historical figure Fate/Grand Order. By examining the similarities and differences, the study aims to highlight how the game's creative portrayal diverges or aligns with the historical context and representation of these figures.

1.4   Limitation of the study

1. Limited access to information: The study heavily relies on the available resources, such as character designs, official artwork, and in-game content. It is possible that some information or details about the visual and narrative elements may be inaccessible or incomplete, limiting the depth of analysis.

2. Subjectivity in interpretation: Analyzing visual and narrative elements involves subjective interpretation. Different researchers may have varying perspectives and interpretations of the same elements, which could introduce a degree of bias in the study. The researcher's own background, cultural influences, and personal preferences may influence the analysis.

3. Contextual limitations: The study focuses on Fate/Grand Order as a specific mobile game and its portrayal of historical figures. It is crucial to recognize that the game's depiction may be influenced by its own fictional universe and storytelling conventions. Therefore, the findings may not directly reflect the historical accuracy or representation of the figures outside the game's context.

1.5   Significance of the study

This study's significance lies in its contribution to the understanding of visual and narrative elements in Fate/Grand Order characters and historical figures. It provides insights into artistic choices, character development, historical interpretation, and audience engagement, fostering discussions within the realms of art, culture, storytelling, and historical representation in popular media.