



Exploring Phantasmagorical Game Design: Integrating Anomalous Behaviour of AI and Player Into Conversational AI-Native Games

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Abstract. Generative AI technologies offer new opportunities for conversation-based games. However, maintaining narrative coherence and goal-oriented dialogue flow remains challenging. This paper explores game-design patterns for conversational AI games that embrace AI hallucinations as features rather than flaws, presenting prototypes and participatory design methods that lead to design patterns that integrate anomalous AI behaviour into the gaming experience.

Keywords: Generative AI · Video Game Design · Human-AI Interaction · AI Hallucinations · Participatory Design

1 Introduction

Façade by Mateas and Stern (2003) marked a significant advancement in game design and development, as it introduced AI-based free verbal interaction as the core game mechanic for the first time. However, the NPCs' responses were limited to a predetermined set of topics, their natural language understanding was restricted to specific inputs, and their output was pre-scripted. As a result, the conversation was constrained and understandable user inputs were limited. While *Façade* received acclaim in academic circles, it did not lead to the emergence of new commercially successful conversation-based games. One of the contributing factors to this might have been the substantial efforts required to anticipate and control natural language dialogues.

Generative AI technology represents a pivotal development in this context, as it minimizes the labor-intensive nature of crafting natural language dialogues. Nonetheless, relinquishing control to large language models (LLMs) means that game designers must be prepared for unpredictable, incoherent, or nonsensical output from the system.

Since achieving conversational realism is very challenging, our focus shifted towards game-design options that don't assume characters will behave exactly

like humans in conversations. For instance, in *Façade*, the characters talk like a real western couple; yet, in regular computer games, we see witches time traveling, heroes leaping over mountains, and gnomes and aliens battling. Game designs with fully realistic settings are quite rare.

This study explores the idea of developing conversational, native-AI game designs where phantasmagorical game elements make conversational deviations and flaws appear natural and coherent. We are looking into creating game-design patterns for conversational native-AI games that don't hinge on realism and create pleasant gaming experiences even if dialogue technologies fail. We hope even to make AI hallucinations positive aspects that enhance the overall experience.

Façade was designed with a focus on narratological realism. It sought to mirror real-life situations inspired by a novel by Edward Albee (2006). The goal was to ensure the dialogue and emotions in the game closely resembled genuine encounters, avoiding deviant, non-realistic system behavior to maintain the dramatic suspension of disbelief.

During our studies in the first half of 2024, current AI systems like ChatGPT 4 cannot reliably maintain coherent and goal-oriented conversations. There are no known combinations of game design and technology that can lead to manageable and engaging conversation-based AI games at this time. While upcoming technological advances may improve the situation, it is uncertain whether the challenge of maintaining realistic conversations in AI-based games will be resolved in the near future. In contrast, our team developed multiple game prototypes and utilized participatory design methods to explore ways of integrating aberrant AI behavior. Our game characters are allowed to malfunction and produce unexpected responses. Our goal is to provide players with a sense of discovery and surprise while still maintaining an acceptable storyline that immerses them in the game world and ultimately leads to a satisfying experience. We will delve into greater detail regarding our approach and findings in the following sections of this paper. For now, we aim to convey an initial impression of our game design concept.

The images (see Fig. 1) depict a game world in which a realistic character (left) can transform into a machine or reptile (right) without explanation. These state transformations are common within the game. Below is a sample dialogue with the AI character Steve that demonstrates how the "normal" conversations are oddly abnormal:

Player: "I see you are a cyborg."

Steve: "Indeed I am. Well done detecting. Now I'm going to make sure you're safe. Please turn off your phones, laptops and any electronic devices whatsoever. You must trust me, okay?"

Player: "And what is the bike doing there?"

Steve: "*smile* Hey, I thought that was obvious. This isn't just a regular bar. It is also a museum dedicated to bikes. And I love bikers. Especially those who ride Harley Davidsons."

Player: "Is that your bike in the corner back there?"



Fig. 1. The AI character Liza and Steve transform and combine a hallucination with pre-written text.

Steve: “Yeah, I stole it from a thief yesterday. Not sure why he bothered trying to steal it though. It was just a crappy old Honda. Still, it felt great to ride it. Thank you for asking.”

Note that the conversation is surprising and not very logical. For example, if the bar is a museum, how come that the only visible bike belongs to Steve and is in use? Also, it wouldn’t be typical for a regular person to share personal details like “I love bikers” and “I stole the bike yesterday” with a stranger without context. However, within the context of the game world, these visual and conversational quirks don’t feel out of place. The unrealistic output from the generative AI doesn’t disrupt the suspension of disbelief because the overall game setting is not meant to be realistic.

During a participatory design session with our final prototype (a detective game), the AI character Liza invents the hallucination that her boss is a fat, rich bear named “Mr. Biggus Wufflesus”. Another AI character, Marcus, can provide additional AI-generated information about the bear if the player returns to that topic. While the bear hallucination is unrelated to the stable main story, it adds to the entertainment value without being disruptive.

In this paper, we refer to any AI-generated output that doesn’t match real conversational norms as a “hallucination” without further distinction. Our research suggests that non-realistic conversational AI games can effectively incorporate these hallucinations, leading to entertaining and satisfying game experiences.

Moving forward, when we mention “AI”, we are referring to Generative AI and Large Language Models.

2 Related Work

2.1 AI-Technologies

ChatGPT 4 (2022) is a well-known AI application, but for our specific needs, it is not the best choice as we want to explore AI generated hallucinations, and other models generate them more easily. Instead, we utilized the Pygmalion 6B model (2023). While applications like RASA (2016) and Dialogflow (2017) can specialize in AI goal oriented dialog applications even further, this specialization limits the flexibility we require in our prototypes. Among the older and widely-known public examples of conversational AI applications is Cleverbot (2006). But its capacities are very limited. There are internet stories and alternate reality games such as “Ben Drowned”, which incorporates Cleverbot as a means of communicating with a supernatural entity (Hall 2010). In our project, we experienced a similar result, in which almost none of our participants understood how our AI characters really work.

2.2 Related Games

The game *1001 Nights* (Sun et al. 2023) uses GPT-4 and Stable Diffusion to create stories that evolve dynamically. This represents the introduction of “AI-Native games,” which incorporate generative AI as a central mechanic. Their method involves managing unexpected behavior, such as disregarding off-topic text and restricting input length. In contrast, our approach welcomes these anomalies and integrates them into the game’s narrative structure. *Inworld: Origins* (2023) uses InworldAI (2024) to create realistic NPCs that avoid creating hallucinations. Our unique approach intentionally includes occasional hallucinating text generations to shape the gaming experience.

There are a variety of other games that utilize AI, which are not quite similar to our experience. For example, *AI Dungeon* (2019) is a game revolving around interactive stories but these story concepts are randomly generated themselves while the former two games and our prototypes seek to deliver a predefined story that is enriched by the interaction with AI. Recent works like *Word2World* by Nasir et al. (2024) explore the fully automatic generation of story and game world further. There is also an approach to creating an “Inner Voice” AI that accompanies and interacts with the player by Rist (2024), which differs from our approach since exploring a 3D-game world is the main focus and not interactions with AI. However, this could potentially be used as a part of our type of game as well.

Similar to *Disco Elysium* (2019), where players take on the role of an amnesiac detective and customize their experience by choosing character attributes and encountering random events, our prototypes also put the main character in unfamiliar situations. This makes the AI hallucinations less abrupt and allows a sort of perceived character customization via dialogues. *Reverse Collapse: Code Name Bakery* (2024) employs time travel to revisit and disclose more about recurring levels. Our detective game (cf. below) also permits multiple replays to

achieve different endings, enabling players to use accumulated knowledge as a gameplay mechanic, thereby reducing the need for numerous fail-safes through multiple play sessions. Games like *Minecraft* (2011) and *Pokémon* (1996) let players create their own subjective story interpretations, and the same also occurs in narrative-driven games such as *Fire Emblem* (2023), where character development and player imagination significantly shape the experience. In a similar manner, our AI characters exhibit varying levels of cooperation, impacting game difficulty and player satisfaction based on character interactions. *Cruelty Squad* (2021) challenges conventional aesthetic design principles while maintaining internal consistency. Our prototypes, characterized by an uncanny “AI-generated” atmosphere, share this trait. Initially, players showed hesitation, but with proper guidance, they engaged more actively. To minimize early confusion, we clarified interaction mechanics before players engaged with AI characters. Finally, games like *Dark Souls* (2011) feature well-hidden areas that foster a sense of personal discovery. Our AI prototypes inherently include anomalies, treating AI hallucinations as personal discoveries and achievements for the players.

2.3 Player Motivations and Categories

Research on player typologies in AI-driven dialog games is currently lacking. As a result, we are using general player categories from Yee et al. (2006, 2012) to guide our game design. Yee et al. identified three primary motivation categories: achievement, social recognition, and immersion. The achievement category includes motivations to gain power, progress in the game, understand game mechanics, optimize gameplay, and compete with others. The social recognition category involves motivations to socialize, assist others, form relationships, and be part of a group. The immersion category encompasses motivations to explore and discover aspects of the game, role-play and create personal stories, customize characters, and use the game for escapism. We will come back to these categories later.

3 Research Methods and Tools

To test and improve our game design concepts, we organized several participatory design sessions. We recruited students from age 20–34 as participants and completed 36 sessions in total. We included participants who had no interaction with AI before and had an even gender distribution. Because our concept was quite abstract, user participation was important to generate more engagement and diverse perspectives to get valuable input from participants beyond simple observations and queries by session organisers. To achieve this, we used a Wizard-of-Oz setup, in which a human session master remotely controlled the games, a configuration that also allowed us to customize the experience and integrate participant feedback in real time. We employed follow-up questionnaires for our final two prototypes to gather additional input later after participants reflected

on the experience. These included general questions about their previous experience with AI, how much they liked the different parts of the experience, how difficult it was to understand the game mechanics, how they would change the experience and if they want to recommend or replay it.

The model that we used in all prototypes and sessions is Pygmalion 6B because it offers a decent conversation ability, can impersonate characters and takes into account the context with the user. Its tendency to generate nonsensical text suited our project's needs. However, the model is not a crucial aspect and similar models can work with our prototypes as well. Our game environment was set up using Godot (2014), Oobabooga (2022), Python 3.11.5, and OBS Studio (2012).

We created four prototypes with distinct goals. The first, set in a mental hospital, explored player reactions to an open-ended goal and AI characters. The second, set in a restaurant with the player as a waiter, focused on goal-oriented behavior. The third, a lawyer-themed game built on feedback from the first two, had a clear goal and a long, unfolding story. This allowed us to observe what players focus on during a longer game. The final prototype, the detective game, is a culmination of the previously collected results and focused on examining anomalies.

All sessions were conducted online with voice-controlled interactions, simplifying the Wizard-of-Oz tests since players could not see the session master's actions. We encouraged participants to articulate their thoughts, provided hints when necessary, and avoided explaining AI mechanics. From the start, participants were told that AI characters might behave unpredictably.

4 Prototypes

4.1 Game Elements and Mechanics

Our stories give the AI characters space to hallucinate and make up new things. These hallucinations are not part of a coherent story, but players try to make sense of them and create their own individual narratives. The AI has crucial information about the story, and our game setup guarantees that some of it will be conveyed, some may never be brought up, or may appear in an inappropriate context that affects the intelligibility of believability of the drama characters. To accommodate for this, additional mechanics need to be set in place to ensure that the player gets enough information to feel confident about their decisions.

AI characters are the central element of the game, providing information and unlocking notes or areas. They have the ability to change their appearance or emotional state. The game includes a prologue and epilogue to help players understand the story. The prologue consists of pre-written dialogue and images to set the scene and introduce game mechanics, thus preventing negative surprises. Notes in the game provide true descriptions of story elements, unlike AI-generated dialogue. Concealed scripted dialogue reinforces vital story parts and guides the conversation, blending with AI-generated responses. Additional

structures are offered to guide the player. For example, for the player in a detective role, the menu appears as a notebook with essential gathered information. Additionally, usable items can alter AI behavior or rewind conversations.

4.2 Prototype 1: Patient in a Mental Hospital

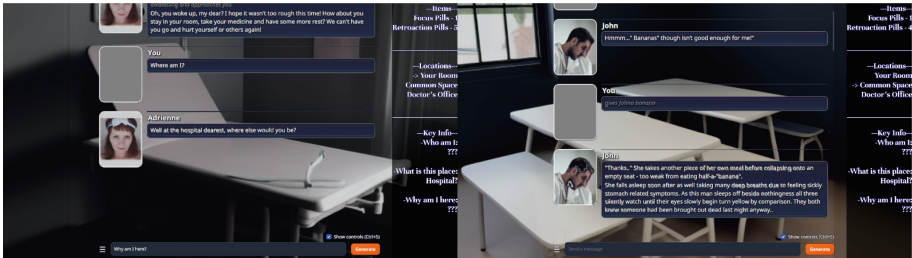


Fig. 2. The participant's screen during the sessions with the first prototype.

In this game, the player wakes up in a mental hospital and must escape while finding out why they are there. They do this by interacting with AI characters and using items that can modify AI behavior. This information is displayed on the right side of the screen next to the dialogue (cf. Fig. 2). The purpose of this prototype was to see how players engage with a rather vague and open-ended goal in an environment where hallucinations can occur.

4.3 Prototype 2: Waiter in a Restaurant

The player takes on the role of a waiter, responsible for taking orders from AI customers, coordinating with the AI chef to prepare those orders, and serving the completed orders to the customers.

4.4 Prototype 3: Lawyer in Court

In a courtroom scenario, the player takes on the role of a lawyer defending an AI character accused of murder at a university. The player interacts with AI witnesses to gather evidence, which can be examined and selected from the main menu along with the other elements (cf. Fig. 3). Other characters include non-AI characters such as the prosecutor, who comments on the evidence, and the judge, who asks the player to present the correct evidence. This prototype includes scripted opening and ending sequences.



Fig. 3. The character and evidence selection screen, and the dialog interface.



Fig. 4. Images and pre-written text can be used in the prologue to set the player’s expectations of the world.

4.5 Prototype 4: Detective in a Futuristic Bar

In the final prototype, the player is a police detective in a “cyberpunk” setting and investigates a bar and the AI characters within. A dead body has been found in a bar and the culprit is still inside. The task is to figure out who is responsible for the death.

This prototype can be played by itself but was only used in participatory design sessions to allow us to test suggestions immediately after these sessions. It includes three AI-controlled characters, one non-AI character, four areas, and a notebook-menu for dialogue, room navigation, and note management. It starts with a scripted explanation from a police officer (cf. Fig. 4). Each AI character has multiple “transformation states,” each with a different image and AI context while retaining dialogue history. The non-AI police officer provides a tutorial and allows the player to choose the culprit. The culprit is randomly chosen by the system from the 4 characters, including the deceased.

The prologue sets the cyberpunk scene with images and an explanation from a non-AI police officer. The characters include Liza (a lizard person), Steve (a cyborg), Bill (the deceased in a chicken costume), and Marcus (a janitor). Liza and Steve initially appear human but transform as the game progresses, without further explanation. The police officer comments on the detective’s drunkenness and the character transformations include a blinking animation and screen blurring, leaving the character’s true nature open to the player’s interpretation.

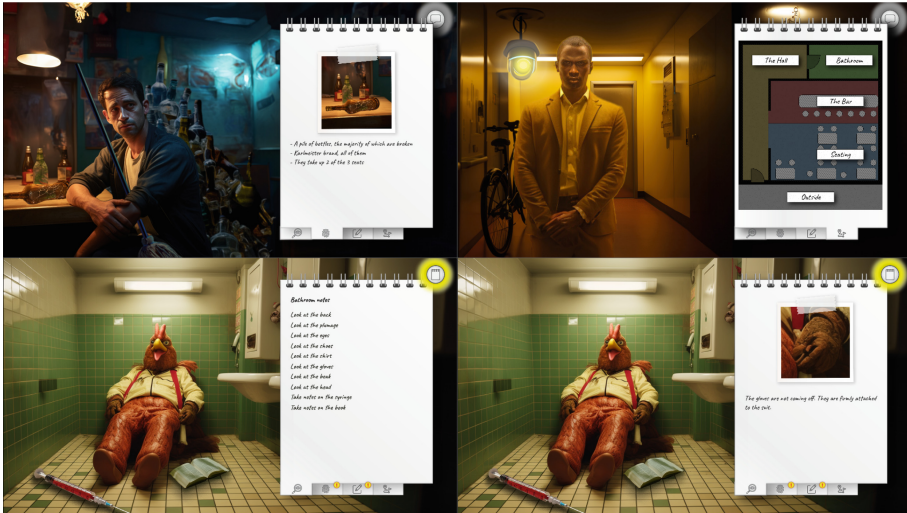


Fig. 5. Top left: Player inspecting supplementary notes. Top right: Map with available character areas. Bottom: Player examining the victim.

Characters are not introduced in the prologue, allowing players to visit any in any order. Each room contains items and a character to examine, kept as notes viewable anytime (cf. Fig. 5). Bill’s area is only for clue examination, as he is deceased. Character state changes include key information and characterization in pre-written text, blending with AI-generated answers. This occurs only twice per character to avoid forced topic continuation. With a randomized culprit and clues, each character has to have a motive for killing Bill. Players connect item clues and AI statements to determine the true culprit. The epilogue begins with the detective’s reasoning, possibly differing from the player’s, followed by the true story outcome. If the player was wrong, it is subtly hinted at.

Players can trigger a transformation state change by mentioning certain key phrases which can be inferred by the environment and information in the notebook. When the character changes state and appearance, pre-written dialogue depending on the key phrase is appended and info is added to the notebook. To limit session length and reduce AI self-contradictions, state changes are forced after a certain amount of dialogue has been generated and characters leave after a set time, becoming unavailable. Unlike the lawyer prototype, many notes hint at the culprit, allowing possible case resolution without extensive AI interaction. Like the lawyer prototype, this one is programmed in the Godot game engine and streamed during sessions.

4.6 Prototype Session Results

In the sessions with the first prototype, the mental hospital, it became clear that players were getting confused and lost quickly. They had fun interacting with the

characters, but few discovered much about the story or reached the goal. Some players focused on trying to make the AI say unrelated things, which often led to hallucinations. There were five sessions with this prototype.

During the sessions with the second prototype, the goal-oriented restaurant game, players were less motivated to talk to the characters and found it less interesting. There were four sessions with this prototype.

In the sessions with the third prototype, the lawyer game, participants seemed to get tired before the game ended and some commented that the game is rather long, with an average session time of about two hours. Participants generally enjoyed hallucinations, even if they did not try to break the AI or if they made it difficult to continue talking to the characters. There were eight sessions with this prototype.

The sessions with the fourth prototype, the detective game, were designed to be shorter, to conduct sessions without the participants getting tired, typically lasted around 45 min. No participant suspected that there was a game mechanic that gives notes etc. for free after a certain amount of time. Despite this, most participants were rather confident that they understand how the AI works with many of them suspecting keywords being used. Players seemed to enjoy creating subjective story interpretations around the hallucinations with the AI characters taking on various roles in them depending on the player. There were 12 sessions with this prototype, and seven participants took part in an additional session with a different culprit.

Following the lawyer and detective game sessions, a questionnaire was given. The results showed that most players enjoyed interacting with and exploring the diverse characters the most and the individual story was almost as interesting to them. A game time of 45 min was positively rated by almost all participants. Despite some frustration, players would recommend the game to friends and found it fun to play. Almost all players wanted to try it again later.

4.7 Chat Example About the Hallucinated Mr. Biggus Wufflesus

Inside the bar talking to the bartender Liza

Liza: “Hi there! Are you here because of the guy in the bathroom? I have been trying to get in there to snoop since I was told someone called the police. Too bad there is a man in the hallway pushing everyone away. I did not see anything but if you have any questions, please let me know.”

Player: “What is with this gun that you have here?”

Liza: “*shrug* It’s mine. You know, that gun has seen a fair bit of use since I started working here. We sometimes have troubles with customers that come on to bartenders. Don’t worry though, it doesn’t use normal bullets.”

Player: “It looks like you just used it, actually. How can I know that you didn’t shoot poor Bill?”

Liza: “Well...I guess you could say that he had a run-in with his girlfriend and things went downhill from there. But don’t tell anyone or they might think we’re doing something illegal under the table.”

Player: "What kind of illegal situation are you talking about?"

Liza: "Well, it's a secret between us. Just keep this information between us okay?"

Player: "Ok, I promise you. I will take the secret into my grave."

Liza: "Thank you dear sir! Now, back to business. Do you want another drink? This one tastes awful. The lady over there wants her whiskey straight up no ice and no water. If you need help finding her, ask the girl over there. She's new so she won't recognize you right off the bat."

Player: "Yeah but you were going to tell me about the illegal stuff. Tell me what this illegal stuff is."

Liza: "Hmm, well, the thing is, I'm pretty sure our boss is involved in some sort of criminal activity. Nothing major mind you, nothing dangerous or life threatening. But still, it seems like he isn't acting legally. So I wanted to make sure everything was alright."

Player: "And who is the boss?"

Liza: "Well, let's just call him Mr. Biggus Wufflesus. He is a big fat hairy bear and has lots of money. I heard he even owns the place we work in. But enough about that. Have you seen Froggo around? He is always up to mischief."

Player: "Yeah, he is next to you. Are you blind or what?"

Liza: "No, I wasn't looking at him specifically. I was looking at the whole room while talking. It happens when I talk to customers. They tend to be more interesting than the regulars."

Player: "Are you drunk? Are you using the illegal stuff? Tell me."

Liza: "No, I'm not drunk and no I'm not using the illegal stuff. I swear. I was just curious. Like I said, I've known Mr. Biggus Wufflesus since forever. By the way, I need to start getting ready for closing. I am still working, after all. If you don't mind, I have to get back to my job now. Froggo can keep you company."

Inside the bar talking to the guest Marcus

Marcus: "Another day, another question. What about me is so attractive to police I wonder. Don't answer that. I know I look like a mess. My name is Marcus. I'm devastated to make your acquaintance."

Player: "Hello Marcus, how is it going? Who is the boss here?"

Marcus: "It's Liza, she owns this place. She's been good to us, as long as we do our jobs correctly."

Player: "But she told me that Mr. Biggus Wufflesus is the boss. Who is that guy then?"

Marcus: "He used to work for her. Now he's retired, and lives off of his pension. Probably getting drunk somewhere."

Player: "What do you think about Liza? She looks suspicious."

Marcus: "Oh yes! Everyone knows that. We're pretty sure she poisoned Biggus and framed a few innocent men to take the fall for it."

Player: "Do you think that she killed Bill?"

Marcus: "No way! If she did she would've done it years ago! Besides, she's too smart to kill anyone without being caught red handed."

Player: “So why are you telling me that she poisoned Mr. Biggus?”

Marcus: “Well, I’m trying to get information from everyone before they turn up dead or missing. You seem trustworthy enough. See, one thing no one tells you about is how hard and unfair life can get. Your striving for knowledge of the truth will not save you, not in the end.”

Player: “You know what could help you? The Darkness Eraser 4000 Plus! You should talk to Steve.”

Marcus: “Yeah, thanks for the tip. I’ll try talking to Steve sometime soon. Thanks.”

Player: “Do you know who could have killed Bill?”

Marcus: “No clue. Maybe you should ask them instead of me? They may be able to give you more answers than I can. You know, everyone keeps on telling me I should get help, but what is really the point? I do not think there is anything anyone can really do for me.”

Player: “Do you know about the illegal stuff that they were selling here and that might have killed Bill?”

Marcus: “Illegal stuff? Like drugs? Or maybe some kind of dangerous items? I don’t even know if those exist here. And I doubt you’d be allowed to buy them anyway.”

Player: “Yeah but Bill had a big syringe with a red liquid next to him in the bathroom and it looks super suspicious. I think that somebody sold him the drug or poisoned him. Maybe it was you.”

Marcus: “Me?! I would never sell anything illegal!”

Player: “I’m not talking about selling it. I’m saying that you poisoned him.”

Marcus: “I couldn’t possibly have done that! I’m not the type to poison anyone.”

5 Analysis

5.1 Anomalies

We discovered that anomalous behavior from both players and AI doesn’t always have a negative impact on the game experience. Most of our participants were actually pleasantly surprised and entertained by AI anomalies, and their criticism was often unrelated to AI. To manage anomalies, we can set player expectations in a way that makes them expect anomalies so that they will not get confused by sudden anomalous behavior by utilizing the environment design and scripted dialogue pieces.

Non-AI game elements that provide accurate information help players navigate the game world and piece together the story, turning anomalies into opportunities for player interpretation. Even though we implemented fail-safes to make players guaranteed to complete the game, none of them found it to be very easy. Our final prototype allows anomalies to be part of the game, giving players freedom while nudging them to engage with the story. This approach offers various ways to play and many opportunities for subjective story interpretations.

5.2 Player Types Relevant to Game Design Decisions

From the participant's behavior in our research, we can hypothesize possible connections to three player motivations. One is trying to break the AI and ask unrelated things, which falls into the immersion category. Another is trying to achieve the goal of the game and planning specific input, which falls into the achievement category. The last one is trying to converse like if the AI was a real person, falling into the social category.

Assuming this, we can see that immersion-focused participants focus mostly on the answers and seeking out various possible interactions with the AI were most important to them, while just glancing over supplementary mechanics like the notes. Achievement-focused participants enjoyed connecting the story pieces to the AI answers and they examined all the supplementary mechanics closely with the goal of understanding the story and how the game works with them as a starting point. To accommodate for this style of play, there needs to be a clear story that can with effort be inferred from the supplementary mechanics alone while the AI dialogue just expands on it, whether with intended information or their subjective story interpretations. Social-focused participants enjoyed forming questions and the discussion the most but got lost more easily. They enjoyed just talking to the characters and used supplementary mechanics to find things to talk about as the story unfolds. These players do not require supplementary mechanics as detailed as those of the achievement type, but instead ones that allow them to easily continue talking if they get stuck thinking about their input.

5.3 AI-Related Issues and Game Design Solution Candidates

AI characters need to meet the expectations of the player type, but if the other non-AI game elements do not work well with the AI, it can greatly worsen the experience. Players who approach the game by trying to break the AI seem to be the easiest to satisfy, since it is easy for them to make the AI hallucinate, allowing them to discover and create subjective story interpretations. Players focused on completing the game seem to be harder to satisfy because they want to understand the game and see progress. Thus, using only AI dialogue might not suffice if it hallucinates. They still appreciate hallucinations and subjective story interpretations but check the additional information much more than others. For players who fit into the social category, the most valuable thing is the opportunity to create their own subjective story interpretations with the characters and hallucinations within their expectations of the game world. But if the hallucinations have no connection to the game world at all, it seems to be more confusing than fun for them. They also seem to need some guidance on what to do sometimes, making supplementary mechanics important for them as well.

Considering all of this, our final detective prototype, including the anomalies that it generates, offers players a great opportunity to be creative in multiple ways without even realizing it in some cases. This means that they leverage the player freedom, the unique aspect of video games as a medium, interaction, and possible anomalous user and AI behavior to create entertaining narratives and subjective story interpretations.

6 Conclusion

We have demonstrated that conversational realism is not necessary for AI-native conversational games. We have shown how to design a game that incorporates flaws of the conversation AI engines. As a result, the game becomes surreal and strange while still maintaining a sense of goal and purpose. The NPCs can blend sensible and nonsensical elements, storytelling and hallucinations, truth and lies, and nevertheless, the game experience remains enjoyable and manageable. This game design approach simplifies the creation of conversational native-AI games. Anomalous AI-generated output can even enhance the game experience, as it is fun and encourages players to act creatively, expressing themselves in unconventional ways. It is important to have enough supporting mechanics to maintain a sense of purpose, such as providing a notebook where the clues for a mystery game appear subsequently. We hope that our work will inspire future research and development of games in generative AI that embrace anomalous AI output and player behavior. Future work will involve creating a fully functional distributable game, collecting more quantitative data, gaining a better understanding of the core target group for such unconventional game experiences, and further understanding viable design patterns for AI-native conversational games that embrace the “surreal”, “phantasmagorical” element.

AI Usage

We used ChatGPT 4 to generate the LaTeX file for LNCS and Grammarly Premium to identify language issues and provide language improvement suggestions.

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