

Research Question:

What features do RPG Maker VX Ace scripters believe to be part of a universal or ideal set-up for an RPGM script?

Critical Conversation:

Literacy in video games / literacy in software

Purpose:

Understand the generally accepted or universal layout of scripts to better understand script writing and using RPGM in general.

Primary Research Methods:

To answer this question, I plan to use interviews and observations. Interviews will involve speaking with 3-5 scripters of varying experience levels to understand their perspectives on what makes a script effective or ideal. Additionally, I will show these participants 3-5 scripts, including examples that are intentionally flawed or incomplete, and observe their reactions and evaluations.

Assessment Criteria:

Conclusions of each subject will be set on a scale from “least detailed” to “most detailed” with each rhetorical “move” used acting as points for this, ie. Wanting an introductory block will move one point towards “most detailed” while removing an introductory block will move one point towards “least detailed”. The sum of points will be analyzed as one part of the research conclusion. Then, the features listed as points or extraneously during interviews will be compared to point sums to determine the “typical” script for all interviewees.

Selection Criteria:

At least one will be of a beginning skill level, and at least one will be at an advanced level (based on number of scripts made/used). All other subjects will likely exist in between the two, to maximize the perspectives acquired. Interviews will be done digitally; Discord is a platform easily accessible for most subjects.

However, each interviewee must have experience directly in RPG Maker VX Ace, and subjects that have used RPGM but not Ace will not be selected.

Interview Questions:

1 “What might you add to this script to make it more understandable?”

5 “What parts of the script might you remove, seeing it as being nonessential?”

2 “Is an introductory block necessary or should the user be able to analyze the code to understand the script?”

6 “Should scripts be more modular, even though a specific script might have additional dependencies, or should they work ‘out of the box’?”

7 “Should a script even have a predetermined layout or explanation?”

3 “Should warning blocks be included in scripts?”

4 “Is it necessary for scripts to have built in debug or should the user be responsible for solving any further errors?”

8 “Should scripts be translated to English as a universal language? Or is the user responsible for translating it or determining its use from code?”

Move criteria:

Many scripts have introductory blocks, warning blocks, variable blocks, and multilingual writing. Assessment of these will be enlightening towards determining the universal script.

Benefits of Interviews and Observations:

As Driscoll (2011) explains, interviews allow researchers to collect detailed and specific information directly from participants, which is particularly useful when exploring niche or expert topics (p. 163). Interviews will enable me to delve into scripters’ individual experiences and uncover nuanced insights that may not be evident through other methods. Observations complement interviews by capturing immediate, unfiltered reactions to stimuli—in this case, sample scripts (p. 160). By observing their evaluations, I can analyze how participants critique scripts in real-time, providing valuable context to their verbal responses.

Drawbacks of Methods:

However, as Driscoll notes, interviews can be limited by the availability of participants and the potential for self-reported bias, where participants might frame their answers in ways they believe are favorable (p. 162). Similarly, observations may suffer from researcher bias if I am not careful to distinguish between my interpretations and participants’ behaviors (p. 161). These issues are compounded by the limited sample size, as it may be difficult to generalize findings from 3-5 participants to the larger RPG Maker scripter community.

Primary Data Collection:

To support my research, I plan to collect the following data:

- Interviews with scripters about their ideal script features.

- Reaction notes from observing participants reviewing example scripts.
- Annotated feedback on intentionally flawed scripts to identify common critiques.
- Genre examples of widely praised RPG Maker scripts to analyze shared features.

These methods align with Driscoll's emphasis on mixing primary research approaches for a more comprehensive study (p. 157). The combination of interviews, observations, and textual analysis of community-generated content will ensure that my findings are grounded in diverse and relevant data sources and are not restricted to individual game genres.

Timeline:

Week 5-6 Feb 3-16:

Writing of interview scripts.

Week 7-8 Feb 17- Mar 2:

Interviews.

Week 9 Mar 3-9:

Analysis of data and writing the form of script suggested to be the universal layout (answer to research question).

Week 10 Mar 10-16:

Research article outline.

Week 11 Mar 17-23:

Final Research article.

Week 12 Mar 24-30:

Feedback of final research article.