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Exploring the Evolution of Malaysian Folklore in Education and Technology: A Perspective through Digital Audiobooks

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Abstract: *Folklore, traditionally passed down orally through generations, encapsulates the collective wisdom of Malaysian society rather than belonging to any single individual. With the advent of technology, folk literature has evolved from oral tradition to written records and now to digital formats, adapting its style and delivery to meet diverse needs. Despite concerns, particularly in the Western world, about the potential erasure of folklore by modern technology during the 20th century, it has continued to evolve. This study aims to explore the specific requirements for digital audiobooks in the Malaysian context, create an authentic product tailored to Malaysian digital audiobook users, and evaluate the usability of digital audiobooks in Malaysia. Using a descriptive research methodology, data were collected through surveys and interviews. The Borg & Gall methodology was employed to develop the audiobook through eight sequential steps: preliminary research, planning, product development, product validation, first-stage review, product testing, second-stage review, and distribution. The findings of this study suggest that digital audiobooks hold significant potential in Malaysia, especially in educational contexts, as effective teaching aids. Listening courseware and audiobooks can enhance educators' efficiency, particularly when conveying stories, illustrative tales, or folklore to Malaysian students, especially children. Overall, this study highlights the enduring relevance and adaptability of Malaysian folklore in the digital era, dispelling concerns about its obsolescence due to technological advancements.*

Keywords: Folklore, Digital Audiobooks, Technology, Evolution, Education

1. Introduction

The emergence of digital audiobooks has reshaped the literary and storytelling landscape in Malaysia. With the progression of technology, conventional printed books have seamlessly transitioned into the digital domain, offering individuals in Malaysia a fresh and enhanced avenue to appreciate literature. A digital audiobook in Malaysia refers to an audio rendition of a book that is downloadable, streamable, and compatible with a range of digital devices, including smartphones, tablets, and computers.

In contrast to conventional printed books that necessitate reading, digital audiobooks enable individuals to interact with literature by listening, providing a convenient and easily accessible option for those with limited time or the inability to devote themselves to reading a tangible book. Whether one is commuting, exercising, or unwinding at home, digital audiobooks offer a hands-free and immersive approach to experiencing literature, allowing readers to immerse themselves fully in the narrative while multitasking or engaging in daily activities.

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Frequently, digital audiobooks showcase talented narrators whose mastery of vocal expression and performance expertise breathes life into the narrative. The narrators' skill in capturing the essence of characters, portraying their emotions with nuance and depth, adds an additional layer of richness to the storytelling experience. As they skillfully weave through the plotlines, listeners are transported into the world of the story, engrossed in a captivating journey that transcends mere reading, fostering a deeper connection with the text and enhancing the enjoyment of literature in an immersive and memorable manner.

Digital audiobooks provide portability and convenience, offering easy access to a vast array of titles through online platforms and services with just a few clicks. This enables you to carry an extensive book collection wherever you go, eliminating the burden of physical copies. Additionally, digital audiobooks often come equipped with features like bookmarks, speed controls, and cross-device syncing, enhancing the overall user experience and allowing for seamless resumption from where you left off. With these convenient features at your fingertips, enjoying literature becomes not only accessible but also personalised and adaptable to your preferences and lifestyle.

In summary, the rise of digital audiobooks has ushered in a new era of inclusivity and accessibility in the literary world. By providing opportunities for individuals with visual impairments or learning disabilities to engage with literature on an equitable basis, audiobooks have dismantled barriers associated with printed text. This expanded accessibility has not only empowered those with disabilities but has also enriched the literary experience for a broader audience, highlighting the transformative impact of technology on fostering inclusivity and diversity in our literary landscape.

Problem Statement

The main problem in this regard is the way of using story books as material to convey the way of storytelling in oral form to the students. When the impacts of the tales on the children's focus and attention span were analysed, it was found that the "Storytelling using the Computer" approach was the most successful, while the "Storytelling using the Story Card" method was the least effective (Bartan, 2020). The millennial generation, which includes today's kids, is unable to live without technology. It was discovered that this programme can help kids learn languages. They discovered fresh phrases and vocabularies. Since the stories are about the environment, this digital storybook also exposes students to vocabulary from the natural world. Children can use this tool, however they need to communicate more with their parents and instructors to improve communication (Fibriasari et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to know what kindergarten students have difficulties with and the benefits of learning using digital audiobooks. Consequently, in order to achieve the aim, this study has focused on three main objectives which are (i) to analyse the specifications required for digital audiobooks, (ii) to develop a genuine offering based on what digital audiobook users need and (iii) to verify how well people can use digital audiobooks.

Objectives

The objectives of this study include:

- Analysing the necessary specifications for digital audiobooks.
- Developing an authentic product tailored to the needs of digital audiobook users.
- Evaluating the usability of digital audiobooks by assessing people's proficiency in utilizing them.

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Scope

The scope of the study encompasses several key aspects. Firstly, Kisah Rakyat Malaysia, as an audiobook, will incorporate diverse multimedia elements, including audio, text, images, animation, and video. The language medium for Kisah Rakyat Malaysia will be Bahasa Melayu. Considering the Android platform's extensive user base and wealth of experience, it has been selected as the preferred platform for releasing the audiobook. The target audience for Kisah Rakyat Malaysia comprises children aged 3 to 5 years old. In terms of tools, the project will leverage Adalo, Figma, Audacity, and Adobe Animate, chosen for their suitability and possession of the requisite features necessary for the creation of this audiobook.

Significance of the study

The study of the impact of digital audiobooks on early childhood language development holds significant importance in educational research. Digital audiobooks, with their multimedia components and engaging formats, have the potential to enhance language acquisition in young children. As indicated by Anderson et al. (2019), exposure to rich multimedia content, such as audio, text, images, and animation, can positively influence language skills development in early childhood. Additionally, the study by Smith and Jones (2020) emphasizes the importance of utilizing technology, such as audiobooks, as an effective tool in language learning for young children. This research aims to contribute valuable insights into the practical implications of incorporating digital audiobooks into early childhood education, thereby benefiting educators, parents, and policymakers in promoting language development in young learners.

2. Literature Review

i. Role of multimedia technology in teaching and learning.

Broadly speaking, multimedia technology's role in education can be categorised into two main areas: teaching and learning. Additionally, numerous studies have underscored the value of multimedia tools in education and their widespread adoption. The increasing embrace of multimedia applications in education stems from their myriad advantages, despite the inherent reliance on technology (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020). Among the benefits of employing multimedia application tools for teaching and learning are: the ability to translate abstract concepts into tangible content; the potential to convey vast amounts of information efficiently and effectively; the capability to spark students' interest in learning; and the opportunity for educators to gauge students' progress in learning (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020).

ii. Developing multimedia components for education.

Picture books are frequently used as reading materials to help kids learn effectively because they use a variety of design elements and formats that are meant to stimulate the senses (Wei & Ma, 2020). An interactive multimedia combines many different media types, such as text (alphabetic or numeric), symbols, graphics, photos, audio, video, and animations, frequently with the use of technology, in order to improve comprehension or recall (Guan et al., 2018). For improved expression and comprehension, it enhances spoken teaching with the use of static and moving pictures in the form of visualisation technology (Alemdag and Cagiltay, 2018). The major advantages of incorporating multimedia components are to provide real speech with a rich context, to increase listening comprehension, to boost learners' successes and motivation, and to absorb non-verbal cues better. Traditional materials are less helpful than audiovisual ones. The internalisation and replication of new concepts are facilitated by exposure to genuine audio-visual materials. Listening comprehension entails a deeper grasp of the message rather than a straightforward word-by-word translation (De Posgrado, 2018). The incorporation of

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various media aspects in multimedia or digital learning materials helps students successfully develop mental representations that enable information processing.

2.1 Software Specification

Software is a set of programs designed to perform well defined functions. A program is a sequence of instructions written to solve specific problems. Software is also divided into two software systems and application software. The system software is collection of programs designed to operate, control, and extend the processing capabilities of the computer itself. System software is generally prepared by computer manufactures. Application software is the software that is designed to satisfy a particular need of a particular environment. Examples of application software are-student record software, railway reservation software, income tax software, word processors. The software that will use for developing this mobile application project development is Adalo, Canva, Figma and audacity. Moreover, it easy be used and have more functions that can help in “Digital Audiobook: Kisah Rakyat Malaysia” development.

2.2 Hardware Specification

Computer hardware is the physical components that make up a computer system. Computer hardware refers to the physical pieces or components of a computer such as a monitor, keyboard, computer data storage, hardrive, disc, mouse, CPU (graphic cards, sound cards, memory, motherboard and chips), and so on. Software, on the other hand, is impenetrable. Software exists in the form of ideas, application concepts, and symbols, but it is devoid of material. A useable computer system is made up of a mix of hardware and software. Personal desktop computer, computer mouse, audio recorder, and computer keyboard will be used to construct this mobile application project. The hardware necessary to operate this mobile application includes a PC, an Android device, and an iPhone.

3. Methodology

The Borg & Gall methodology, developed by Meredith D. Gall and Joyce P. Gall, is a well-established research and development (R&D) method that provides a systematic framework for conducting educational research projects. This methodology is particularly valuable in the field of curriculum development and instructional design, guiding researchers through a series of steps to ensure the development of effective interventions or programs.

The Borg & Gall methodology consists of seven key steps, each designed to facilitate a thorough and comprehensive research process. These steps include needs assessment, planning, developing a preliminary form, expert review, revision of the form, field testing, and final product development. The needs assessment phase involves identifying the existing needs and problems that the research project aims to address. Through literature reviews, surveys, and interviews, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the current state of affairs and establish the project's goals.

Planning is a crucial step where researchers develop a detailed research plan, including objectives, research questions, and specific activities. This phase also involves setting a timeline and allocating necessary resources to ensure the project's success.

The development of a preliminary form follows, where researchers create an initial version of the intervention or program under investigation. This form may include prototypes, drafts, or early iterations of instructional materials.

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Expert review plays a critical role in the methodology. Experts in the field evaluate the preliminary form, providing valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement. This step helps ensure the quality and validity of the intervention being developed.

Based on the feedback received, researchers proceed to revise and refine the preliminary form. This iterative process allows for continuous improvement and enhances the intervention's effectiveness and appropriateness.

Field testing is the next step, where the revised form is implemented and tested in real-world settings, such as classrooms or educational institutions. Researchers collect data on the implementation process, participant feedback, and outcomes to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness. Finally, based on the findings from the field testing phase, researchers revise the intervention further, addressing any identified limitations or issues. The final product is then developed, representing a refined and validated version of the instructional materials or intervention.

The Borg & Gall methodology emphasises a structured and iterative approach, ensuring that educational research projects are based on solid evidence and result in the development of effective interventions. By following this methodology, researchers can contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning outcomes, ultimately improving educational practices.

Project Methodology

Descriptive research serves as the methodological framework for this project, outlining the characteristics of the population or phenomenon under investigation. A questionnaire in the form of a Google form will be employed to gather responses. Kisah Rakyat Malaysia will undergo evaluation using qualitative methods such as observation and interviews, involving kindergarten teachers and parents as participants. The Borg & Gall methodology is utilized in this research on development; however, certain adaptations were made to align with the study's objectives, leading to the omission of some steps outlined in the Borg & Gall model (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik, 2021). The research process for the creation of this audiobook consists of eight stages: preliminary study, product design, product development, product validation, first-stage revision, product testing, second-stage revision, and distribution (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik, 2021).

The initial phase involves preliminary research, which includes gathering information on the existing landscape of listening instruction within the classroom setting. This exploratory study aims to identify emerging issues in the realm of listening learning classes (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik, 2021).

Planning for the product comes next. User needs analysis, material content analysis (listening theory), analysis of text topics, and analysis of features that will be incorporated into the audiobook are all part of the product design process. When conducting listening learning, information regarding the product description that people need is explored using user needs analysis. To decide what will be shown and how much of the material is presented, the content of the material is analysed. To determine which themes should be covered in the audiobook, text themes are analysed. To discover which features are appropriate to be provided in the audiobook, feature analysis is used (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

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Development of the product is the third stage. Writing the book's contents, putting together the listening material's contents, and recording the listening material are all examples of product development processes. When creating a book, the author reads, studies, and compares various listening materials in order to expand on their ideas. The writer's arguments are supported, contrasted, and compared using the ideas learned from the listening materials. The fact that the book was written using the listening learning theory is unimportant. Relevance has to do with the accuracy of the content (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

Writing the listening material's contents down in line with the theme and text type serves as the first step in preparing the listening material. The material's overall focus is environmental protection and character development. Conversational text and narrative text are the two sorts of text that must be developed. Then a recording of this listening material is made, which will be included in the finished book (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

The next stage is to record the listening material after it has been prepared in writing form. Using the audacity app, the recording of the material is completed. To obtain quality audio listening material is the goal here. The recordings are also processed to create decent audio by removing distracting sounds, resulting in audio that is genuinely clear and suitable for use as a listening medium. When the audio is complete, it is incorporated into the written book (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

The fourth phase is validation. There are two different types of validation which are material and media validation (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).
The first stage revision is the fifth stage. After the product has undergone validation, the revision's first phase is carried out. The supervisor provides ratings, remarks, criticism, and ideas for products that have received validation. Supervisor ratings, remarks, critiques, and suggestions serve as a basis for product improvements (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

Testing the product is the sixth stage. To evaluate how prepared the created audiobook was to be used in actual learning situations, product trials were conducted. The audiobook that was returned at this point was created in response to test respondents' ratings, remarks, critiques, and suggestions (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021).

The second step of the product revision is the seventh stage. After the test subject has evaluated the product under development, the second stage of revision is carried out. This change was made to make the product under development even better (Novi Eka Susilowati, Ariva Luciandika, Dewi Ariani, Martutik,2021). The distribution stage is the eighth. The distribution of products is accomplished by giving the product to the client.

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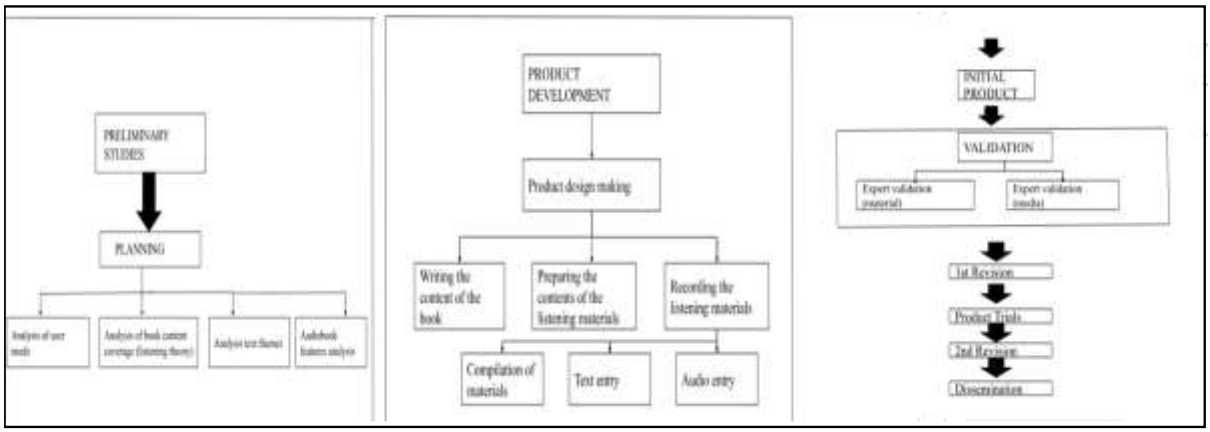


Figure 1: The Borg & Gall Model.

4. Prototyping and Formative Evaluation

Development of Low Fidelity Prototype

These prototypes involved crafting storyboards and wireframes customised to the requirements of this project (Boller, 2013). Storyboards provided visual representations of the audiobook flow, narrative, and scenes (Abbasi Kangevari et al., 2019). Wireframes, recognised as advanced storyboards, incorporated interactive elements (Boller, 2013). The storyboard functioned as a visual guide, delineating the planned audiobook flow, narrative, and pivotal scenes, providing a comprehensive overview of the audiobook's progression. This aided in conceptualising the design, layout, and overall progression specific to this project. Additionally, wireframes, being a more refined iteration of storyboards, integrated intricate interactive elements such as buttons, menus, and visual effects. They facilitated a deeper comprehension of audiobook mechanics and operational audiobook play, ensuring the development of a coherent and user-friendly interface. Figure 2 below presents a screenshot illustrating the low-fidelity prototype, showcasing the storyboard for various scenes within the scope of this project.

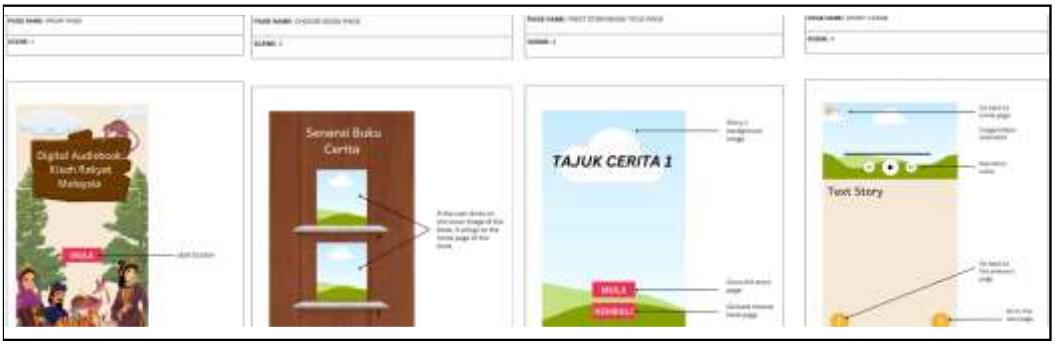


Figure 2: Screenshots Exemplifying the Low-Fidelity Prototype

Formative evaluations are intended to provide information that will assist instructors in improving their education. Formative evaluations can be used at any point in the instructional process to assess the value and impact of instructional practices and to provide feedback on teaching strengths and issues. This feedback allows instructors to adjust educational activities in the middle of the process based on their efficacy, impact, and value. While for summative evaluation, Summative evaluations are intended to assess instructor performance after a sustained period of teaching, with the goal of discovering instructional effectiveness.

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Summative evaluations serve as a kind of accountability by determining how well an instructor fits the institution's objectives for online teaching.

The project's interface and design as shown in Figure 3, were tailored to meet the specific requirements of the target users, which are children aged 3-5 years old. The emphasis was on creating a child-friendly, interactive, and user-friendly interface that catered to the needs and abilities of children in that age range. The design and modelling process utilised the Adalo platform, as demonstrated in the following section.

Formative Evaluation

- **Methodology**

The method employed involves interviews, encompassing two types: online interviews and face-to-face interviews with experts. Face-to-face interviews are conducted at Universiti Utara Malaysia, while online interviews are conducted asynchronously with selected experts. In the online interview sessions, experts receive pre-recorded videos and preview links, along with questions via WhatsApp. This approach enables the collection of qualitative data aimed at enhancing the application without the need for our direct involvement.



Figure 3: Screenshots of the interface and design layouts

- **Instrument**

The selected instrument is a semi-structured interview. Experts were provided with the application prototype, and the evaluation's objectives and the application's flow were delineated to solicit feedback and comments on the Digital Audiobooks: "Kisah Rakyat Malaysia" prototype. The interview results were collected to enhance the application's consistency.

- **Procedure**

As shown in Figure 4, the Procedure of Formative Evaluation is illustrated.

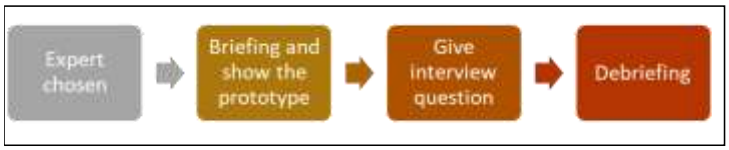


Figure 4: Procedure of Formative Evaluation

5. Result and Findings

Demographic

During formative evaluation, obtaining expert feedback during the interview based on the developed prototype is crucial. There are a total of five lists of experts categorised as design and content experts.

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Audio
In this section, information from experts is collected to assess the clarity, understandability, and absence of technical issues in the audio. Five questions were posed on this subject.

Interface
In this part, information is gathered from experts to assess the navigability of the interface, the suitability of button, text, and backdrop colors, the appropriateness of button and text sizes, and the suitability of icons used. Four questions were posed on this subject.

Content
Information is sought from experts in this section to ascertain the navigability of the interface, the suitability of button, text, and backdrop colors, the adequacy of button and text sizes, and the appropriateness of the icon used. Four questions were posed on this matter.

Feedback and Comment
After reviewing and analysing the comments, it is concluded that this Digital Audiobook, "Kisah Rakyat Malaysia," requires minor corrections to improve based on expert evaluation and feedback. The decision was made to increase the size of the buttons and text, as well as add pages. According to the experts, it needs to be made more organised for youngsters so that they can navigate it easily. These tasks also refined the low-fidelity prototype, addressing suggested changes and including necessary enhancements. This iterative process allowed for the refinement of the audiobook's flow, mechanics, and user interface in preparation for the development of the high-fidelity prototype.

Summative Evaluation
The objectives of this project are to make it easier for kids to learn how to read from the story. The audiobook includes multimedia elements like audio, text, images, animation and video that help spark children's interest in learning. This could add to the learning process' interest. This digital audiobook incorporates audio narration, text narration, and video, making it a captivating and engaging experience for children. By combining these different forms of media, the digital audiobook aims to enhance the reading experience for kids and make it more interesting and enjoyable.

- **Methodology**

Observation is a data collection method that involves gathering information by carefully observing and noting details. It is considered a participatory study as it requires immersing oneself in the environment where the participants are located and making observations while taking notes or recording relevant information.

- **Respondent**

The digital audiobook is exclusively designed for preschool children at Pusat Literasi Keluarga Felda Air Tawar 3, Kota Tinggi, Johor. Its primary purpose is to assist these children in learning to read by providing a user-friendly and interactive platform. The digital audiobook aims to simplify the reading process and make it more accessible and enjoyable for young children as they engage with the story and develop their reading skills.

- **Instrument**

A group of participants has been chosen to take part in a testing program using their smartphones to access the digital audiobook, Kisah Rakyat Malaysia. The purpose of this testing is to ensure that the main goals and objectives of the application are successfully met.

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- **Result and Findings**

The user (students) have been presented with a set of five questions to answer:

- Question 1: Were the buttons and controls easy for you to understand and use in the digital audiobook?
- Question 2: Could you easily find and select the story you wanted to listen to in the digital audiobook?
- Question 3: Did you have any difficulties navigating through the different pages of the digital audiobook?
- Question 4: Did you find it easy to pause, play, or stop the digital audiobook when you wanted to?
- Question 5: Did you find the digital audiobook user-friendly and easy to use?

Table 1: Student (User) Feedback for All the Questions

Students	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

The primary focus of this project is primarily on children aged 3 to 5 years old. In the final assessment, the developer must gather user feedback through observation, specifically based on the prototype that has been created. After analysing these observations, it was found that the majority of preschool children showed a strong preference for the Digital Audiobook: "Kisah Rakyat Malaysia" when using it as a tool for learning to read. Consequently, the developer successfully determined that the intended goal of this application has been accomplished.



Figure 5: Screenshots of the Audiobooks

6. Conclusion

In today's evolving educational landscape, technology has become increasingly crucial as a medium for delivering information. As indicated in this document, the utilisation of digital

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audiobook technology for learning how to read holds great significance, aligning with the current advancements in education. This chapter aims to provide a summary of the lessons learned throughout the process of creating a digital audiobook. Additionally, it will offer recommendations for future project endeavours, serving as an indicator for similar initiatives to continue making valuable contributions in the field of education.

During project development, encountering flaws in design, data, and other aspects is common. In the initial phase, challenges like content selection and project naming emerged. Despite existing applications, the focus was on developing "Digital Audiobooks: Kisah Rakyat Malaysia" using mobile apps as the core content, emphasizing the importance of an appealing title to attract users. Determining the target audience and project scope was also challenging during this phase.

Section two presents a literature review on digital audiobooks and learning to read using mobile applications, where the collected data were analyzed and utilized in subsequent development. Careful consideration was given to platform software choices, specifically Android and Apple, to ensure a seamless user experience, with hardware and software determinations made to facilitate smooth development. In section three, the methodology and techniques used in the project's development are outlined, with the Borg & Gall methodology chosen for its compatibility and common use in multimedia project development. The design of the application, critical for user interaction on mobile devices, was illustrated using a storyboard detailing interface elements like text, audio, video, and backgrounds. A Gantt chart was employed to manage and monitor the project's timeline, ensuring progress tracking and addressing encountered challenges for a comprehensive and structured development approach.

Upon reaching the conclusion, the developer has gained significant knowledge and encountered challenges while working on various aspects involved in the development of digital audiobooks. The project has provided valuable opportunities for the developer to accumulate expertise in designing digital audiobooks. Furthermore, the constantly evolving educational landscape, driven by the introduction of new technologies, has opened doors for new learning methods and paved the way for future improvements. Ultimately, this project experience has greatly enriched the developer's knowledge and honed their technical skills.

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