

[0025] At 207, the audio foreshadowing has become noticeable enough to strongly suggest that the outcome of the wagering game event is favorable, both through variation from the sound effects or music normally played and from an increase in pitch, tempo, and volume. The results of the wagering game are therefore confirmed directly to the user at 207, such as by showing or highlighting the winning payline or cards on the display or by sounding a siren or “banging up” credits into the wagering game player’s credit count.

[0026] In other embodiments, music or other sounds are increased in volume, played faster, or played at a higher pitch to build excitement regarding the outcome of the wagering game event. In yet another example, a sound leading up to a game result is played for a longer than usual time to suggest a more favorable result, such that excitement builds more the longer the sound is played.

[0027] The sounds in some embodiments of the invention will suggest a specific result, such as a spectator at a craps table calling a slang name for the number rolled. In other embodiments, the sounds themselves are not unique, but the number, volume, or other characteristic of the sounds will suggest a result of the wagering game event.

[0028] The presentation of sound that foreshadows the result of a wagering game event is based on predetermined knowledge of the event, making some embodiments of the invention particularly well-suited for use in computerized wagering games where the visual presentation of the wagering game event result occurs after the wagering game result is determined. Predetermination of the result enables the sounds presented before the wagering game event result is displayed visually to be altered in various embodiments of the invention to foreshadow the result.

[0029] In a more detailed example shown in FIG. 3, a game with an old west theme is implemented. When a winning game outcome is detected in the audio module at 301, a series of changes to the normal audio playback simulating a saloon environment are made. First, the wagering game system makes a slight change in the sound played on a simulated honkytonk piano at 302, such as by adding additional notes, trills, or other sound variation to the played song. The noise of people in the saloon increases slightly and gradually at 303, suggesting a build in excitement in the saloon environment, while in a further embodiment the pitch and tempo of at least one of the honkytonk piano song and saloon noise also increase.

[0030] The bartender finally declares “drinks are on the house” at 304, just before the winning result is displayed to the game player at 305, and in some further embodiments further foreshadows the outcome by smiling just before or while saying “drinks are on the house”. The winning result is then confirmed at 305, such as by showing the winning hand of cards or showing a winning reel combination, and by playing bang-up sounds as credits are added to the wagering game player’s credit bank.

[0031] This example shows how theme-specific sounds can be added or modified to employ audio foreshadowing, indicating that an event worthy of celebration is about to occur. It also shows how subtle video changes such as a bartender or dealer smiling can be used to further suggest or foreshadow a positive game result.

[0032] Both audio and video are typically controlled by a computerized system within the wagering game machine, using software instructions to control the wagering game machine hardware as shown in FIG. 4. The wagering game system of this example includes a processor 401 and memory 402, coupled by a bus 403. The bus also couples the processor and memory to nonvolatile storage such as hard disk drive 404, or other nonvolatile storage such as flash memory. A touchscreen display panel 405 is used to convey visual information to the wagering game player and to receive input through touches to certain regions of the display, and a speaker 406 is coupled to an audio channel, enabling the wagering game system to play audio such as music and sound effects. User input to the wagering game system is also provided via other hardware such as buttons 406, and network connection 408 couples the wagering game system to other wagering game systems such as to a controller in a progressive slot area network or to an accounting system.

[0033] In operation the processor 401 executes software instructions loaded from nonvolatile storage such as hard disk drive 404 into memory 402. The instructions are used to control the hardware, and to perform processes such as causing the wagering game to run and to be displayed on the touchscreen display 405. In some embodiments, the instructions further include instructions for implementing an audio module operable to perform functions such as those described and shown in the flowcharts of FIGS. 2 and 3, and as described in the appended claims. In other embodiments, the audio foreshadowing functions described herein are implemented in some other combination of hardware and software, or in hardware or software alone.

[0034] The network connection 408 is used in some embodiments of the invention to receive results of the wagering game, such that the wagering game machine shown generally in FIGS. 1 and 4 doesn’t decide the result of the wagering game but receives the result from a central server and displays the result to the wagering game player. The network connection in another embodiment is used to couple or link a group of wagering game machines together for purposes of audio foreshadowing, such as in a progressive slot network version of the previous saloon example in which audio foreshadowing is played on all machines to foreshadow any winning game in the progressive network area. For example, in one such embodiment, the honkytonk piano song change, raise in pitch, raise in tempo, and “drinks are on the house” indicators are played on every wagering game machine in the progressive area network every time a game player in the progressive game area wins a jackpot of a certain level, but the volume doesn’t increase as much for the special sound effects for the wagering game players other than the winner.

[0035] FIG. 5 illustrates an example of progressive variation of sound volume to foreshadow a winning game result. In this continuation of the saloon-themed example, a reel spin is initiated and a winning result is determined at 501. The volume level of some sounds such as reel spin sounds or other system sounds not used for audio foreshadowing remain constant in volume as shown in track 1. The volume level of the audio foreshadowing elements, including extra notes or other musical changes to the honkytonk piano sound, an increase in the volume level of the crowd in the saloon, and other foreshadowing sounds are gradually