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MATCH ‘EM RIGHT!

(A CARD GAME TO LEARN MALAY AND ENGLISH PROVERBS)

Norasyikin Abdul Malik, Nurul Ain Hasni, Mohamad Syafiq Ya Shak and Puteri Rohani Megat Abdul
Rahim

*Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, 32610 Seri Iskandar, Perak,
MALAYSIA*

E-mail: noras967@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Figurative speech is a common way to deliver one’s thought to another in everyday conversation. The beauty of language lies on these figurative idioms, proverbs which reflects the spiritual treasures of language of the people and culture. People use proverbs, idioms, sarcasm, irony, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, metonymy, teasing, and puns in their speech for various aspects of lives and purpose. However, when one tries to use it in another language other than their mother tongue, complication and confusion might occur as most second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) speakers are not familiar with the proverbs of the referred language. Most of them will opt for direct translation of the native language proverbs instead of using the proverbs of the language they speak with similar meaning. As Johnson (2006) explained that games offer a meaningful context for learning, Match ‘em Right was crafted to help these L2 and FL speakers to not only experience the excitement of game playing but also enrich their knowledge of the language and culture that they are learning or speaking. A few studies revealed that when proverbs are taught in the classroom, they can enrich knowledge of one’s cultural and literary understanding. However, second language learners face difficulty in understanding English proverbs. Based from an initial investigation conducted to study students’ knowledge in identifying the English proverbs that have similar meaning with the Malay proverbs, reveals that majority of the students failed to know the right English proverbs of the Malay proverbs that they know. Some of them don’t even know the meaning of the Malay proverbs even though they have heard them before.

Keywords: card game, understanding english-malay proverbs, ESL learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Among others, Baker (2012) feels that proverbs are culture specific, in which they convey culture-specific images and concepts that will be difficult for second language learners to translate them literally because they are not well-versed in the second language culture. Furthermore, because every culture has its own and distinguished linguistic feature for example in terms of its grammatical structure (Hambleton & Zeniski, 2011) and word order (Omar, Haroon, & Abd Ghani, 2009), problems will arise when these second language learners try to translate or find the parallel version of the second language proverbs in their mother tongue. Hence, it is common to see second language learners use proverbs or idioms that have been translated directly from their native language without realizing it is wrong. Thus, the aim of this project is to introduce a novel way in using matching card game to understand and remember English and Malay proverbs easily.

2. NOVELTY

A learning process through observation, action as well as interaction facilitates learning and promotes better understanding (Kruger, Herzog, Baby, Ude, & Kragic, 2010). This is the approach that resides through Match 'Em Right, as its players observe their opponents' actions, interact with them, and calculate their next course of action. This will help them to understand proverbs while remembering them in an interesting way. There are many card or board games that focus on learning the structure of a language like grammar components or sentence structure. Nevertheless, there is none such game which relates to learning proverbs of different languages specifically English and Malay.

3. USEFULNESS

Match 'Em Right offers pleasure and social enjoyment improves memory retention in using proverbs as well as understanding them. It is also portable and accessible for all, helping both adults and children to improve their fine and gross motor skills, exercise the mind (Scolastic, 2014), as well as giving the chance to interact with others while engaging in a friendly competition. Not only that, according to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, playing card games in class encourages kinaesthetic intelligence, and visual-spatial intelligence as it involves the learners to focus on movements, interactions and pictorial representation. Undoubtedly, this card game does not only offer social enjoyment and cross-cultural enrichment, but also promotes intelligence development among its players (Campbell, Campbell, & Dickinson, 2003).

4. OBJECTIVES

There are three objectives:

- a) To learn the respondents' attitude in playing the matching card game.
- b) To determine the respondents' competence in playing the matching card game.
- c) To investigate the respondents' sensory and imaginative immersion in playing the matching card game.

5. METHOD

A quantitative study using a survey method was used to 56 diploma students from the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Survey at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch after they played the matching card game in their language class. The questionnaire was adapted from IJsselsteijn, de Kort, and Poels (2013).

6. FINDINGS AND ARGUMENT

The results in Figure 1 displays the overall frequencies and percentages in relation to the respondents' competence in playing the matching card game. The results show that almost 70% of the respondents fairly believed that they were skillful in 41 playing the matching card game (% = 69.9, N = 39). This finding indicates that the card game is enjoyable as the challenge in the game matches with their skill (Sweetser & Wyesth, 2005).

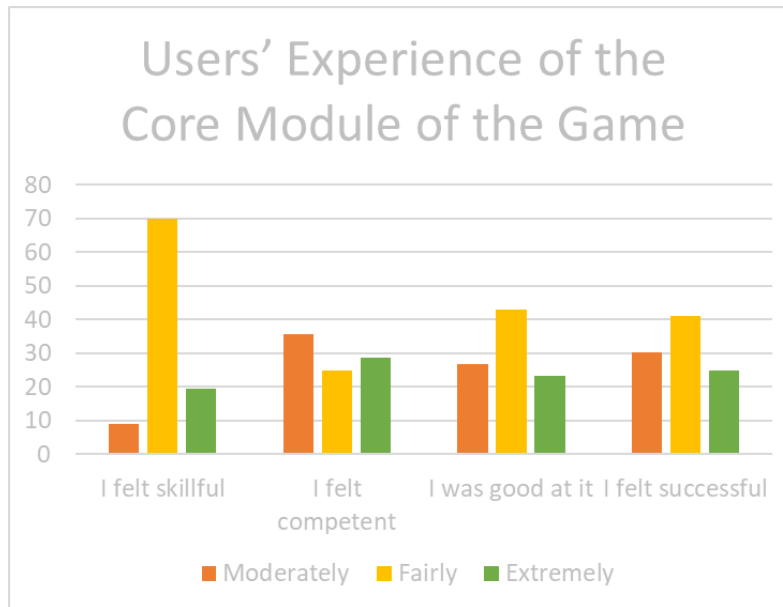


Figure 1. Users' Experience of the Core Module (enjoyment)

The results in Figure 2 display the overall frequencies and percentages in relation to the respondents' sensory and imaginative immersion in playing the matching card game. The findings show that majority of the students fairly believed that the matching card game allows them to explore things (% = 51.8, N = 29), and they were impressive with the game (% = 53.6, N = 30).

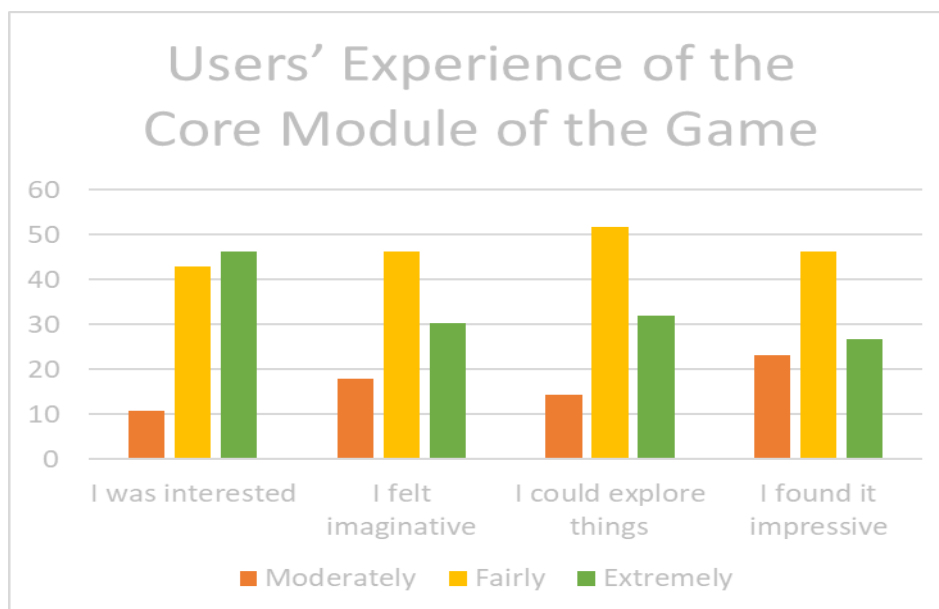


Figure 2. Users' Experience of the Core Module (sensory & immersion)

7. COMMERCIALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

Match ‘em Right has numerous commercialization potentials. First, it could be marketed to English as Second Language learners who would like to master English proverbs and their first language (L1) equivalents. Second, it has and its affordable cost of manufacturing. Third, Match ‘em Right also comes with various vibrant colours and adorable graphic that can attract both young and old to buy and play with it. Lastly, it is also an interactive learning tool in classroom, and this could make learning more enjoyable.

8. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Overall results reflected positive perceptions among respondents in learning proverbs using card game. The responses from both core module and social presence showed significant result as the card game were found to be effective in promoting positive game experience. Respondents rated the card game to be more engaging as they were competent in playing it, allows them to explore things and create fairly challenging learning environment. However, further research on the effectiveness in employing the card game should be conducted. It is believed that the nature of the card game is applicable to most available disciplines and recommends parallel studies to be conducted, especially for a wider range of samples or population. This helps to further strengthen the claim of the effectiveness of this card game in helping to reinforce learning among learners.

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