

SERIOUS GAME MOTIVATION IN AN EFL CLASSROOM IN CHINESE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a report on the findings of a qualitative PhD pilot research study on the integration of Serious Games specifically Mingoville to motivate the Chinese primary students in an EFL classrooms. It was carried out in two primary schools: the students are both from low and high income families respectively in Jiangsu Province, PR, China. Content analyses techniques were used to analyze the transcript of which the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes using numbers to specific characteristics within the text, the categories emerged from data by reading through each transcript as well as from literature reviews. The findings identified the differences on how Mingoville motivated the students in the two schools. It revealed some mitigating factors that affected the student's full motivation when Mingoville was integrated in their English learning classroom. The findings indicate that teachers and parent's attitude are key factors to consider for a successful game based learning. Lastly, this paper explores the question, how can Serious Games be integrated successfully in ESL classrooms in order to motivate the Chinese primary school students?

Keywords: Motivation, Mingoville, Serious Games, Chinese Students, Primary Schools, ESL

1. INTRODUCTION

To perfectly acquire a language, motivation is an essential tool. Considering the importance of motivation and engagement in language learning, one cannot stop thinking of finding better strategies to motivate and engage the digital generation in primary schools in China who are bored with the present method of teaching and for whom English is not their mother tongue. (Ruphina .A,& Liu .M, 2011).The use of games in traditional English language classroom has been in existence for some time now and is a practice that has been regarded as educationally sound despite the limited empirical evidence to validate this contention. Games are often use for motivational or fun purposes. Games have often been included in language teaching to stimulate motivation and authenticity in communicative practices. The sudden transition of games from traditional classroom to game based classroom has attracted a great deal of interest both from educators, researchers, teachers and students. There are many studies showing the benefits of computer games for children and adults in terms of providing motivation, engagement, developing skills and encouraging collaboration .Wood and Stewart(1987) asserted that incorporating digital games into instructional design improves students' skills in practical reasoning, complex problem solving (Hayes,1981) transfer of learning(Crisafulli &Antonietti,1993)making inferences and engaging in inductive reasoning (Mayer &Sims,1994)and using Metaphorical Maps to generate alternative solution paths(Quinn,1996).Other researchers that explored this area includes Prensky (2001),who discussed the potential of educational computer games and listed 12 elements as to why games engage people. Those reasons includes: games motivate players (to achieve goals), gratify the ego (when winning), are fun (through enjoyment and pleasure) and spark the players' creativity (to solve the game problem). The use of interactive games has impacted the mode of learning. (Foreman et al., 2004).Krasilovsky (1996) claimed that young learners tend to 'favor "edutainment" applications-academics-oriented games.' Wood (2001) investigated the use of learning games as a learning tool and concluded that game-like formats could be more effective at capturing learners' attention than traditional media such as textbooks. Looking at all these claims on the potential of game based learning, there is need to reconceptualise our attitude and thinking on how the Chinese digital natives will maximize the potential benefits of computer games to motivate and engage the primary schools students in an ESL classroom. .Also, this research hopes to address the problem of boredom, and lack of interest which pupils always complain when learning English. According to Nguyen and Khuat (2003). For

many learners studying English as a foreign language, vocabulary learning is considered boring, as they have to memorize unfamiliar words and spelling and are typically asked to complete lots of exercises. In accordance with the reported statistics, it is estimated that China has the largest number of internet users than any country with at least 457 million people online at the end of 2010 of which two thirds engage in online game play. (China Information Base, 2010). The Chinese parents become worried about the excessive time spent on games and social-networking sites that interferes with their children's schoolwork. Though, this figure does not stipulate the population of primary school students that plays digital game. We realized during our study that most all the students at the target schools played uneducated commercial computer games, though the number of hours played differed. Playing computer games in China is not a new pupil phenomenon, but the issue lies on the kind of games they play, Is it a serious games, what is the content of the game, and can the game motivates them to learn or is it just a waste of time? I guess not. If it's a serious game the parents would not bother much about the time spent playing it. If pupils can sacrifice hours playing uneducated commercial games, then integrating serious games in the school curriculum to supplement traditional teaching would go a long way toward motivating and engaging them to learn English as a second language. It is repeatedly pointed out, for example, that young people of their own volition choose to spend many hours playing complex computer games outside school (Keri F). The desire to harness this motivational power to encourage young people to want to learn is the main drive behind an interest in computer games for learning. As Chinese primary school students devotes their energy ,enthusiasm and concentration when playing commercial computer games, why wouldn't educational computer games be integrated in the English lessons to supplement ,motivate and engage pupils as people naturally gravitate to the things that interest them? The objective of this study, is to find out how well Serious games like Mingoville can motivate and engage the Chinese pupils to learn EFL efficiently and to identify the necessary factors that may hinder the students motivation in learning with computer games as it supplements the traditional teaching.

Mingoville.com

Mingoville is an online interactive English learning program, for children between 5 to 15 years old. A flamingo narrates the Mingoville instructions in English.Mingoville was designed and developed by the Danish e-Learning Center. The Mingoville platform is full of colored pictures, animated objects sound, music and flash movies which attracts the young learners. The platform is built on a narrative concept and contains 10 Missions that take the learners through a variety of themes such as The Family, Colors and Clothes, Numbers and Letters. The Mingoville platform can be described not as a full game in itself, but rather as a web-based learning environment that capitalizes on the mini-games and other entertainment activities that children engage in their spare time outside school.

English in Chinese Primary School

China is a multilingual, multidialectal country. There are 55 minority groups in China with 44 living in the western provinces. While Mandarin is the official language of China, most of the ethnic minorities have their own native language. Cantonese is commonly spoken in southern and western China as well as Hong Kong and the Chinese government has paid much attention to English learning and teaching since 1978(Siemon .A.2010). Prior to 2001, English language had not been a compulsory course in primary schools although, some teaching of English had taken place at this level since the mid 1980s (Wang Q, 2002). This has been on a very modest scale although, on an increasingly larger scale mostly in urban key schools. Nevertheless, the teaching of English at this level had not been standardized, due to its unrecognized position in the school curriculum, limited availability of qualified teachers and lack of appropriate teaching materials. The starting age to learn English varied from age 8 to age 11 and the weekly time allocation ranged from 1 period to 4 periods depending on the availability of the teachers. (Wang, 2002).However, since the start of the new millennium, the Chinese government has become increasingly concerned with the upgrading the level of English language of all Chinese citizens. It was decided in early 2001 that English would be offered at primary level from September of that year, starting in cities and then gradually towns and villages (Ministry of Education Document, April 2001). The Basic Requirement for Primary School English was designed and issued at the same time by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Basic Requirement makes it clear that the beginning age is grade 3 (age 8) and the time allocation recommended is 4 times a week, with a minimum of 80 minutes, based on the principle of shorter periods and higher frequency. English language teaching and learning is booming in China and it is fast becoming the most popular and dominant foreign language in modern China. Coupled with the establishment of the open door policy, the 2008 Beijing 29th Olympics Games, the People's Republic of China's admission to the World Trade Organization and the on going World Expo in Shanghai, the Chinese people's interest in learning English has become more intense. Many English training schools have been set up in different parts of China. English is considered as a means of changing average Chinese person's expectations in the motherland, where upon the language is seen as a tool to better understand the West and the rest of the world to serve the country better. Chinese people regard English as an indispensable tool which can make easier access to modern scientific

and technological advances to the countries where English is the major language. Chinese enthusiasm for English learning is amazing, English study is being inspired by not only the desire to study abroad but also by a need to improve skills and find a good job. Thus, the TOEFL and GRE, along with many other English tests, come to be a must for job hunters. Demand for oral and business English is also growing and spreading all over the country. China's quest to master the English language by all means has brought the introduction of different electronic gadgets like computer, VCD,DVD tapes, MP3 and 4 respectively, in learning English language both at school and home.(Ruphina .A&,Liu .M.,2011)

2. PROBLEMS

Though, lots of efforts have been made to boost the teaching and learning of ESL in China, there are still many complaints, ranging from lack of interest and motivation to learn English, lack of a suitable English environment, lack of interactive teaching methodology to attract the digital natives, lack of confidence, lack of interest to master and remember English words as well as bored teaching and learning attitude (Ruphina .A, Liu .M., 2011). Most research indicates that Chinese students' English learning strategies are primarily focused on reading and writing, on grammar and translation, and on memorization of vocabulary (Rao 2002). However, research has indicated that this traditional grammar-translation method “failed to develop an adequate level of communicative competence (i.e. the ability to use the target language for authentic communication)” (Hu, 2002,). In China, teaching is a typical teacher-oriented mode. The teacher mostly dominates the class leaving no option for students to answer and ask questions not even to exchange ideas with the teachers and asking a question is considered an admission of a lack of knowledge(Siemon .A.2010). Asking teachers in class or in public by spontaneously raising unsolicited questions about the subject may be seen as an admission of a lack of knowledge or as a deliberate, offensive act challenging the teacher's authority and credibility. This predicament has really affected the teaching and learning of English quality in China. Some Chinese students often complain that they have learned English for 20 years but cannot communicate in English. Some primary school English teachers even find it difficult to communicate fluently in English .These challenges have called for quick intervention .The question lies on “if all efforts have been made to salvage teaching English as a second language in China, why do the challenges already mentioned still exists ?.Time has come to address the issues in order to satisfy the hunger and thirst of the digital natives who wish and are determined to master English language like native speakers. Serious games seem to be one answer to solve the present predicaments faced by the pupils in learning EFL in China. They seem to intrinsically and extrinsically motivate the pupils and help to keep the attention of digital natives. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach (Prensky, 2001). The digital natives pay little or no attention to the classroom activities claiming that they are boring and not active. This has repercussions in education, especially in fields related to language and literature, where students are expected to engage in readings of various lengths. According to Gee,(2003)the educational potential of (video) games is associated with the experience of deep expertise – an experience that is often not offered learners in school, as schools are generally focused on testing and competence rather than performance. Interactivity is an underlying theme when the children speak of computer games and chat. The fact that children like to be in control and make decisions is made clear in many interviews and discussions with children in the research project.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to examine how Mingoville an interactive Serious game would motivate, engage and arouse the interest of Chinese primary school students who are struggling to master EFL. The continued complaint of lack of motivation, boredom, and lack of good English learning environment has called for concern on how to integrate educational computer games in teaching and learning EFL to attract the attention and interest of Chinese young learners of English language .These young learners are the digital natives who desire a change in teaching and learning of EFL in their various primary schools.

4. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research questions that this study aimed to answer are:

- 1) How did Serious game motivates Chinese primary school students to learn EFL?
- 2) What factors affected the Chinese primary school student's motivation and engagement when Mingoville was used in their classroom?

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

5.1 The Participants

The target groups in this study are two primary schools in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, China with different socio-economic status. School A consisted of students from high socio economic class families while schools B were students from low income families. The occupation of school B's parents are mainly farming and small scale business while the high socio economic class parents tended to be managers,doctors,businessmen, or

other professional. The children are within the age range of 8-11 years old and both male and female students were involved in the study. The total population of the two students that participated in the study was 229, School A population was a total of 121 while 106 students participated in school B. Classes chosen for the research study were grades 4 and 5, two classes from each grade, 4 classes in each school. The two grades were chosen because Mingoville was meant for children of their age and also because the Mingoville contents fit their English language level. Before the researcher chose the grades level for the experiment the researcher had discussions with the English teachers. They examined the Mingoville content and concluded that the Mingoville content was relevant, though not related with the school English language curricula. The general class size of the school was 25 to 35, though school B seems to have smaller class sizes and both school classes lasted 40 to 45 minutes. In addition, the children of the school were already acquainted with using computers in other activities. Their previous acquaintance with computers helped our research in that the students had played different types of Chinese computer games before at home for recreational purposes and not for learning English language. It is pertinent to mention that the teachers are all university degree holders and had continuously used computers for more than five years. The teachers had the knowledge of computer games though; they had not been applying it in the teaching of EFL. Rather, the teachers applied traditional games

5.2 The Instrument

The two schools are well equipped with about 53 computer in School A and 35 computers in school B, including internet connection and one whiteboard. All the students had a computer to use during the research study, including the teacher controlled computer. The research study took place at the school computer laboratory.

In collecting the research data for the study, several research instruments like Observation, Field notes, interview and literature review was applied.

5.3 The study procedure

The pilot study was done for the trial testing of the research instrument adopted. This was personally done by the researcher, with the help of the research assistant and two trained observers. The whole process started April 2009, with the help of my supervisor; a meeting was organized and was held at the Nanjing primary school experimental centre. The technology teachers and the English teachers of the two schools attended the meeting. The researcher introduced the research plan to the participating teachers. After long discussion and deliberation, the teachers agreed to convey the research plan to their respective school leaders and promised to get in touch in two weeks time. The teachers were asked to go home and study Mingoville.com after the researcher introduced the Mingoville platform. The first week of September, 2009 was used to educate and give the teachers an in-depth training about the use of Mingoville. The teachers also asked questions about the aim, potential and purpose of using an educational games like Mingoville.com. Then on 11th September, the main research started by giving of user names and password to the students of school A. The user name and password was created by the Mingoville office in Denmark. It was the beginning of a new session, so some students did not have a user name and password because they were new students. So the researcher created their usernames and passwords with the instruction of the Mingoville CEO. After the issuing of the usernames and passwords, the researcher introduced Mingoville to the students, they became very excited immediately once they were told about Mingoville. Then, flash software was installed on both teachers' and students' computers in order to open the Mingoville web site. The first day at school A was more of interaction with the students and teachers because the school had problems with their school internet connection which was rectified before the second study took place. At school B, the main study started on 13th of September 2009. The research study lasted for five weeks and classes were held once a week for 45 minutes. The Mingoville topics covered during the research study included family, season, numbers, animals etc. The teachers were given free hand to choose and prepare lessons, there was no restriction on the teaching methods to adopt. Prior to the beginning of the research, a letter of consent was written and signed by the supervisor. The letter informed them about the research study, requesting the teachers and the student's willingness to participate in the study. The teachers also verbally informed the students to pass the message on to their parents, informing them on the importance of Mingoville in learning English.

5.4 Interview

The Pilot study interview was conducted on the last week of the research study, however, after every English lessons the researcher, research assistants and the two observers, would stay for a while to chat with the students to enquire their true perception about game based classroom and Mingovilled content. After this enquiry both the study group will discuss further on our observations and students response. Semi- structured interview was adopted, a pre-set questions was prepared to ask the students but allowed more open ended answer that lasted for 20 to 40 mins. The interview was mostly concerned on the digital games for learning. Altogether, 58 pupils

participated in the interview from the two schools and there was no special criterion in choosing the interviewee. In some occasion, it was the teacher or the research assistant that picked the students, at least in each class 6 to 8 pupils represented their class. The research assistant also translated most of the interview responses. The method adopted to analyze this research study was content analysis of which was analyzed manually. The researcher systematically pawed through the interview text and assign codes to the text into manageable categories by using themes to specify characteristics within the text.

5.5 Credibility of the study

In analyzing the data, the researcher read the data extensively and coded the data. Then, transferred the raw data to the research assistant without showing the categories that emerged from the researchers coding. The research assistant then coded the raw data after reading through it. Later, categories were compared with the research assistant categories that emerged. The two categories were merged into a combined set. After the interview, the researcher was in contact with the school, enquiring some information in the areas that was not clear. In this way the researcher hoped to avoid possible misunderstandings. Unbiased data is hard to guarantee when you are doing qualitative research. Some answers can be used for several conclusions for instance, by taking quotes out of their context. The researcher hoped to prevent such consequences by letting the interview objects look over the analysis of their interviews. Furthermore, the conference paper which the researcher wrote was lifted from this research study and was rigorous peer reviewed by the different conference committee and certified it credible to be presented at the conference and published.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Finding for research questions 1: How did serious games motivates Chinese primary school students to learn EFL?

This question was actually raised to gain an understanding of how serious game like Mingoville could motivate and arouse the interest of the Chinese primary school pupils to learn English as a second language. Motivation is seen as a strong desire for learning and acquiring knowledge of English, maybe likened to an engine and steering wheel of an automobile, something that can move students from boredom to interest. Advocates of computer game-based learning argued that computer games have the potential to transform the way in which students learn, motivate engage and arouse the interest and improve active participation of new generation of learners in a way that traditional teaching does not. It is said that Chinese education is more teacher centered but serious games is student -centered. During the course of this study the pupils were interviewed if the Mingoville program had motivated them to learn English. In order to ask this question about motivation three questions related to motivation was created.

A. Do you think that Mingoville motivated you to learn English?

Majority of the students, about 45 students said “Yes” that Mingoville motivated them while 8 said that they don’t think Mingoville has really done much .However, Mingoville is a good method to learn English, and 5 students said that they are not sure, though they would want the teacher to integrate Mingoville or any computer games to teach them. In order, to clarify more on how Mingoville motivated the pupil to Learn EFL, question no 2 answered the question. The students mentioned different sources in which they received motivation from Mingoville program .Many categories emerged based on the interview responses.

B. In what ways did Mingoville motivated you to learn English?

Six categories emerged on how Mingoville motivated the pupils to learn EFL

- Feeling of fun and satisfaction

The mostly cited reasons why Mingoville motivated the pupils was because of the fun and satisfaction derived when Mingoville was introduced in their EFL classroom. We can view fun as excitement and as a vehicle of engagement which might help make it more palatable. According to Bartle (2004) people play games because they are seeking “fun” and Gee (2007) points out that pleasure are inseparable from deep learning and hard work. The findings revealed that Mingoville features like background music, dictionary, recording of voice, replaying of voice, narratives etc created fun, relaxation, satisfaction. Majority of the pupils agreed that they were satisfied because they improved their writing skills, vocabularies, pronunciation and listening.etc. This supports Bisson and Luckner view which states that “enjoyment and Fun as part of learning process that are important when learning new tools since the learner is relaxed, motivated and therefore more willing to learn.

Student’s interview comments: “When I use Mingoville I feel calm, fun and willing to read more”. “I learn fast and fell happy”. “Flamingo is humorous and that helps me to lean happily.” “Mingoville is fun and attractive to play.” “I feel relaxed and happy; the game platform is like a dream world.” “I learn better when I use games; I started playing game since the age of 4.” “Mingoville just like other educational games are stress free and interesting.” “It’s learning by doing, I feel more relaxed” The songs in

Mingoville program motivated and engaged me a lot and I recorded my voice and it's amazing to hear my voice.

- **Autonomy, Free from loosing face and scared of teachers**

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines autonomous as the quality or state of being self-governing, especially the right of self. The students felt that they have the right to choose their own part and confident in exercising that right. In the findings, majority of the students revealed that they prefer using games because they have to learn on their own and avoid loosing face and scared of teachers. Teaching with Serious games also suggests that there are specific features of game play that could encourage student engagement, such as the opportunity to have autonomous control over a responsive environment, and the ability to use games familiar from home in which they can demonstrate expertise.

Student's comments: "In traditional classroom we are passive, always listening to the teachers all the time, but when Mingoville was introduced I felt happy because I had the chance to control the mouse and I felt am in control of my learning, and that motivated me to be interested in using Mingoville program to learn English". "I think I would want the teachers to change their way of teaching by using games like ,Mingoville which motivates us through being related with the school content". "I am still young, I don't like coming to the class every day to recite English words, I always feel scared in our English class because I don't want to fail the teacher's questions, so any time we have class I feel worried. I wish our teacher will continue to use Mingoville because I feel relax and the flamingo instruct you and inform you on what to do. You can also repeat it as long as you like, nobody will laugh at you and you wouldn't lose your face."

In language teaching ,games have often been used to stimulate motivation and authentic communicative practices, as games have been conceptualized as the "the fun factor" of language learning (Warschauer&Healey,1998).Malone(1980) advocated that schools should try to integrate game elements into curricula so as to arouse students' intrinsic learning motives.

- **It improved collaboration and co-operation**

The students said that Mingoville game offered them the chances to collaborate, interact and learn from one another. They also had the opportunity to ask the teacher questions about the Mingoville platform when they are confused with the task. Some friends chose to work together to complete games, they contributed their ideas and learn from one another. In the traditional classroom normally, the teachers speak while the students listen. The students are always passive and do not have the courage to ask teachers questions because they don't want to lose face or because they feel shy or even scared of the teachers. In the Mingoville program, if a student is confused at any stage of the platform he or she has to get it right in order to proceed. So, this encouraged the students to collaborate more and even involve their teacher when they are confused. In China, it is always hard for a student to raise hands and ask teacher question because of the cultural ideology of Confucious style. But in the Mingoville program the students have to ask teachers questions or discuss with other students who are progressing if they wish to proceed to the next level. So the challenging aspect of Mingoville motivated the students a lot because it gave them the chances to interact, share ideas and collaborate.

Students commented "Mingoville is two ways while in traditional classroom is one way, only the teacher talking most of the time. Though, flamingo can't hear me, it gave me an instruction to do something and when I do it perfectly he praises me. I feel am communicating with somebody."

- **Reward and Encouragement**

Reward and encouragement are motivating factors in Mingoville platform that encourages learners to keep their motivation. The learners agreed that they were extrinsically motivated when Mingoville mark good to their work or when Mingoville uses an encouraging word to praise the students when they get the answer correct. According to one of the students "Even if I fail the exercise, flamingo will encourage me to do it again. If it's in the classroom, when you fail an exercise the teacher will scold you, you will become scared, and students don't like to lose face".

- **problem solving ability**

The reasons for considering using games in the class were for motivation and engagement reasons. As shown in the findings, the interviewee admitted that problem solving features in Mingoville platform motivated them, though some of the problems were challenging, they were motivated to solve the questions. According to Keller (1987) another way of sustaining curiosity may be activated by creating a problem situation that can be resolved only by knowledge seeking behavior. Giving the learner problems to solve primarily facilitates application strategies because solving a problem requires the application of relevant knowledge and skill.

Students commented that "The Mingoville program motivated me because when I followed the flamingo instruction and I did the exercise correctly flamingo always response by praising me like saying 'job well done'. "In Mingoville, the more you repeat the exercise the more you learn it .Also, it builds your confidence, and you don't have to worry more about scolding and loosing face."

Alessi & Trollip, (2001) emphasized that Problem solving also facilitates understanding and awareness of one's own thinking and cognitive processes. "Problem solving is the critical cognitive "engine" that drives a vast array of digital games. In fact, problem solving is one of the defining characteristics of digital games as players interpret rules and determine how to play the game. Subsequently, solving problems within the game is where the real potential for fostering problem solving skills and the complex relationship for learning takes place" (Gee, 2007). In Mingoville ESL classroom, students solved the problems in different ways, like paying close attention to Flamingos instruction and carrying out the instruction effectively. Answering the questions, after each part their will be a questions either to complete a sentence, spellings, record their voice etc. the games provide a set of challenges that children must overcome in order to complete the game successfully and all these problems are expected to be solved in order to proceed to the next level and this helped to engage the students more in the game. Though some students commented that they could not skip to another game if they are not satisfied, thus Mingoville was designed that you have to finish a task before proceeding, you can not just abandon a task. The more they were trying to solve the problems the more they are learning New English skills.

- Good learning environment

In the study we find out that majority of the pupils appreciates Mingoville rich learning environment and this motivated the students to learn with Mingoville. The students commented "What motivated and engage me to use Mingoville to learn English is the vivid and rich colors used to design Mingoville platform which made it to look real".. I like the memory games, the pacman, songs, etc "I also like the pure English environment". "The dictionary part of Mingoville programs motivated me more because when I am using Mingoville, if I do not understand any of the words, I will quickly click the dictionary section which will give me the meaning of the word, and shows the picture of the word even pronounced the word. I can easily check my own pronunciation by recording my voice and replaying it again". My spelling is very bad; I improved my spellings when I use Mingoville". "I feel like a player and also a learner at the same time". "I feel active in class when Mingoville was used and that made the class to be more active and interactive. The class is more active when using games than in traditional classroom."

Demotivating factors

Few students mentioned that Mingoville did not motivate them, they also mentioned some factors why they think Mingoville did not motivate them to learn English, they are as follows,

- Lack of cultural element on the game design

"I don't like the teacher to use Mingoville program. The program demotivated my interest to learning English. I don't like the animal flamingo, and they should have used panda or any other beautiful animals that Chinese pupils like. I think flamingo, its ugly". The Flamingo animal seems not to be Chinese primary school students favorite animal. Most of the students suggested that the animals like pandas, cats, dogs or snakes are their favorite. They also think that using their favorite and familiar animal will attract their interest more.

- Boring

"Mingoville program is boring, besides, I don't enjoy learning with computer game". "I actually prefer traditional teaching than game based teaching". I learn well when the teachers talk to me face to face". Though, most of the students agreed that the use of Mingoville motivated them to learn ESL, some students though, few still felt that the traditional teaching method was their ideal method.

- Preference:

"I am demotivated when Mingoville game was used in class, it's so boring and the game content is easy. I want games that are challenging. I prefer the Chinese games". The game content is what attracts and arouses the students to use any game. If they think the game is easy for them, they lose their interest. The game developers should pay more attention on the content of the serious games. Also, it is necessary to study the age and level of the students before developing a game for them. The English level of the students that made this comment is higher than that of their classmates. According to these students, they think that they already know the topic, so there was nothing new for them to learn. Though they agreed that he would prefer a game integrated in learning ESL but they made it clear that games should be challenging.

C. Would you prefer your teacher to use serious games to teach or do you prefer traditional teaching method?

The students were asked questions on whether they would prefer their teacher to integrate Mingoville games when teaching English as a second language. Majority of the students preferred Serious games classroom while few students prefer traditional Methods of teaching, some of their responses included:

“I prefer to use Mingoville because I play and learn the same time”. “When we perform badly in traditional classroom the teacher gets so angry, he gets red face and I become so scared but using Computer game I feel am in control of my learning”. “Using Mingoville or any other English games helps us to learn a lot. Books are boring”. “I prefer traditional class because I think it’s more truthful and useful to learn with it.” “Its more practical, computer games can not help us master the real knowledge” “Students feels happy when they use computer game but they wouldn’t remember what they have learned after the class”. “Traditional classroom requires a lot which the teacher can’t teach us but the computer game can teach us”. “In traditional classroom, the teachers just teach, most students don’t understand but in games you have to be creative to figure out how to solve the problems.” “Mingoville aroused the interest in me to learn English.” “In traditional classroom I can’t speak out my mind because am afraid the teacher would scold me, so I don’t answer questions in class, but in game classroom there is nothing like being afraid.”

6.2 Finding for research questions 1: Research question 2: What factors affected the Chinese primary school student’s motivation and engagement when Mingoville was used in their classroom?

In order to answer research question 2, two questions were created as follow.

A. What challenges did you encountered that affected your full participation in the Mingoville classroom?

The following are student’s comments about the challenges they encountered when Mingoville was introduced in their EFL classroom and this as well hindered their full participation in the EFL lesson.

“At first I do not know how to use the game, I got so lost and confused, and I even forgot what we have learned”. “My English words are limited and I do not understand flamingo’s narrative very well, flamingo speaks very fast”. “Mingoville games forces you to finish one game before you switch to another, it restrict your movement in the game environment and compel you to finish the task before switching to another. “There are many unfamiliar words, though we have option to use dictionary, it takes my time”. The game is boring, it’s not like the Chinese game and I don’t like English” “I don’t like when the teacher controls the games”. “I would rather prefer more challenging games that will attract people”. “Mingoville has lots of activities and they are related, they should try to change the activities”. “The computers always freeze and we have to start afresh, it’s a waste of time.”

B. What do your parents think about the integration of Mingoville game in an EFL classroom?

In order to fully understand the factors that might affect the integration of Serious games in Chinese schools, the researcher extended his questions by asking the students about parent’s feelings and perception of Serious games in an EFL classroom .According to Prensky, (2002) many parents and critics express the opinion that computer and video games are “mindless,”i.e. that kids do not learn anything beyond hand-eye coordination from the thousands of hours they spend playing video games. Other critics express the opinion that digital games impart only negative messages and, in the words of one, “teach our kids to kill.” Still others assert that while players may learn “about the game” they learn nothing “useful” about “real life.” This falls inline with the student’s response about their parents’ concern on playing computer games.

The majority of the students responded that their parents were strictly against playing of computer games as a waste of time, in fact most parents wants their students to concentrate on what the teacher taught in class in order to pass examinations. While very few students said that their parents played along with them. Further enquiry made us understand that the parents that played with their child (ren) understands English and can say some English words. Some also said that playing computer game is a kind of reward from their parents when they finish their home work or do things that pleases their parents.

School homework: “My parents are not against playing computer games but against playing it when I have not finished my homework or read my books for the day”. “Though my parents don’t want me to play games, Mingoville was an exception. I told them that it was an educational game, so they allowed me to play, but my mother always monitors what I was doing”. “My father don’t like computer games, I don’t even play Chinese computer games so he wouldn’t allow me to play Mingoville game.” “I played Mingoville when I got home, since my teacher informed our parents. So there is no problem but I must finish my home work and I played for sometimes before I go to bed. I didn’t stay long because I have to go to school the next day. I will play Mingoville this weekend.”

Though more and more Chinese parents are worried about their children’s game playing, from our interviews and observations we realized that if the parents are aware of the game contents and its specific use for educational purposes their fears wouldn’t be much. All that is needed is proper monitoring to make sure that the

children do not get addicted.

Observation Findings: The researcher, research assistant and the two trained observers observed the lessons. The lessons were taught by the English Chinese teachers using Mingoville.

Engagement and motivational different at both primary schools: We observed that the students at both school were motivated and engaged differently. It was observed that school B was highly engaged and more motivated than school A when Mingoville was integrated in their EFL classroom. When the teaching was going on the students at school B seems to be more active and organized. Though, at School A, the students were also active but we observed that sometimes they did not follow the teachers' instructions. They even stopped using Mingoville and switched to other Chinese games installed on the computer. Some students from school A were complaining that the games were boring and very easy. Sometimes, they don't pay full attention but in an actual sense we realized that though they might think a topic was easy, they could not recognize all the words and did not know the meanings of the words taught. Their familiarity with the topics taught example, my family, colours, animals' etc. does not mean that they have mastered all the contents. Most of the students at school A had access to a computer and the internet at home, they played computer games often and it was easy for them to make a choice about the type of games they wanted to play. The students at school B had less access to computers and Internet; a few of the students have computers with internet connection at home while very few have both a computer and an Internet connection. Perhaps, because the students at school B do not have full access to computer games, they were more engaged and motivated to use Mingoville in their EFL classroom than the pupils from School A. They followed the instruction of the teachers and carried out all the game exercises more than the School A students. It was also observed that though the English level of students at school B was lower than that of School A, the students of school B were so eager to learn English with Mingoville, that they appeared to be more disciplined than the students of School A. From the observations, it seems the school B students were more intrinsically motivated; they were more engaged in using Mingoville to learn ESL.

Homework: The teachers of the two schools gave the students home work to do in the Mingoville Program. It was observed that the majority of the students did not do the home work. The students that carried out their homework were from School A. Few students from school B completed the home work. The reason could be because most of the students at School B do not have access to home computer. Most of the students said they have lots of school home work to do and do not have time to do the Mingoville program.

Class size: Class size is very important when introducing game-based learning in order to manage and organize the students very well. We observed that it was really difficult for the teacher to control the class because most of the students do not follow the teacher's instructions, rather they will navigate to another game platform installed on the computer which they think it's more interesting. So, when the teacher is teaching, those students do not pay attention and the teacher could not recognize this problem. I suggest that a class of 10 to 15 or less is suitable for a game class if a games- based method should be adopted. Chinese classes are normally large in population between 35-50 students in a class. In order to control and discipline the students in game based classroom, small class size is a unique and important factor to consider.

Teacher's attitude: The teacher's acceptance of the computer game programs can easily motivate and influence the students. If the teachers are reluctant to integrate computer games in classroom, it will definitely affect the students' acceptance of game. The teachers should master the games skills. It is not advisable for the teachers to come to the class and start asking the students to teach them how to operate the game. We observed that due to the busy schedule of the teachers, some teachers did not have time to master the Mingoville program very well. Those teachers were not really sure of what they were doing. They felt scared of making mistakes and that disrupts the class. So it is good for the teachers to master the necessary skills needed.

Being in control

We observed that the students wanted to be in full control of their learning when Mingoville was integrated in their English class. They wanted to control their learning; whenever the teacher controlled the computer to teach them they appeared sad. Though some of the students were confused when they were controlling the mouse, they always tried to figure out what to do by asking their classmates or even calling for the attention of the teacher. Throughout the game-playing process, learners have to experience and tackle the problems within predefined learning contexts. According to Gee (2005), leaving learners to float amidst rich experiences but without teachers' guidance in the process of game-based learning does not work.

However, I will suggest that the teacher should control the computer when teaching. If time permits the teacher can give the students a short time to be autonomous by giving them an exercise to complete. Another method which was effective when Mingoville was integrated in one of the primary school was asking one of the students to come in front of the class to control the mouse, carrying out the task while other students watched. Alternatively the teacher should divide the class into two, group A and group B, or boys and girls. The teacher controls the mouse, asking them questions and the side that gets the best score is the one the teacher gives marks. This method aroused the interest of the students a lot. The class was active and struggled to win the game. This method combines both traditional and games based learning.

6.3 Problems Observed

Few of the problems observed when Mingoville Program was integrated were mostly technical problems. Some of the problems were resolved by the computer teachers, while some problems that had to do with Mingoville program were not resolved:

- It takes time to load the game and sometimes the teachers and students feel frustrated.
- Few of the Mingoville words are not in the Mingoville dictionary.
- Sometimes a page freezes and the flamingo stops giving instruction.
- Most of the students always forget their usernames and passwords, and that delays them from signing in.
- Some students cannot follow the flamingo's instruction and pronunciation
- Lack of time for teachers to prepare what to teach.
- Some teachers think Mingoville is not part of their curriculum, so they do not pay much attention to the Mingoville study since they have a lot of school works to do.
- The class time was very short.

7. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this study we concluded that Mingoville or any Serious games, if properly integrated in learning EFL in primary schools in China, will highly motivates, engage and arouse the interest of Chinese digital natives to learn English. In China, teachers must finish teaching the text books assigned for the term. Therefore, no teacher would be expected to use serious games in class unless they are part of the curriculum. From the study, it is clear that even those few students who do not like Mingoville they would still prefer learning EFL with computer games. It's was observed in this study that the integration of Mingoville or any other computer games to supplement traditional teaching of ESL was a better strategy to reach digital natives in China. Research evidence (e.g., Bisson & Lunckner, 1996; Cordova & Lepper, 1996) has shown that fun and enjoyment are important in the process of learning as learners can be more relaxed, motivated and willing to learn. Based on a series of surveys, observations and interviews with game-players, Malone (1980) gave his intrinsic motivation theory, which asserts that challenge, fantasy, control, curiosity, cooperation, recognition and competition are the most significant elements that make game-playing fun and engaging and sustain players' continual motives.

Games are an important part of childhood development and learning often takes place through a child's game-play. Therefore, integrating Mingoville games to supplement traditional learning improved the Chinese students' classroom atmosphere, lowered students' anxiety, motivated and sustained their interest in learning ESL and helped them learn and retain the language with new words, pronunciation, writing and listening, all in a fun way. All that is needed is to properly organize and try to rectify all the necessary impediments listed in the research study. Rieber, (1996) argues that Play, especially during early childhood, performs an important role in psychological, social and intellectual development; it is a voluntary activity that is intrinsically motivating, involves some level of activity and often possesses make-believe qualities. Such attributes are similar to those espoused in modern educational theories where learning should be a self-motivated and rewarding activity.

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