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Students' Perceptions about Gamified Methods in English as a Second Language Acquisition

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Students' Perceptions about Gamified Methods in English as a Second Language Acquisition

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by

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

This qualitative research study will examine whether game-based learning is effective for helping to learn English as a second language (ESL) in the United States. This study will ask participants, particularly adult second language learners, about their perceptions of high levels of stress and anxiety when learning English. The study will also investigate whether game-play motivated students learn English in class. Data collected in this study will be based on interviews, questionnaires, and observations of the classrooms and game play, and the results demonstrated that participants' interest in the game created active involvement in game-play in class.

Keywords: English as a second language (ESL), English language learners (ELLs), game-based learning, game play, motivation, stress and anxiety

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This research will address the main two concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) by investigating whether (1) game-based learning or conducting game play in class is beneficial for ESL and English language learners (ELLs), and (2) whether game play in class will enable ESL learners and ELLs to better use their own English language abilities. The uses of game-based learning methods and instructions are particularly popular because gamified instructions can stimulate language learners' interest and motivation for SLA (Zainol Abidin and Morat, 2011).

The number of ELLs keeps rising in part due to technological development. The English language is considered as a *lingua franca*, or common language that members of other populations might use even if their first language is not English. The population of ELLs are increasing with over one billion people currently learning English, and this population is expected to rise to two billion by the year 2020 (Robson, 2013), and the necessity of acquiring English by non-native speakers of English (NNESs) will continue gaining force for such reasons.

In the United States, an English-speaking country, the population of ELLs from 2014 to 2015 was approximately 10 percent (N=100) in K-12 public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Moreover, from 2006 to 2007, 46 percent (N=100) of adult ELLs were enrolled in either English as a second language (ESL) or ELL classes offered by a state (U.S. Department of education, 2008b). Although the number of ELLs is not dramatically higher than that of native speakers of English (NESs), the importance of ELL class instruction is gaining force for both young and adult ELLs.

Background of the Problem

ELLs from parts of various countries acquire English under different conditions and in different settings, and English teachers and instructors can be both native and NNESs. It is important to understand that there is a distinctive difference between acquiring English in an English-speaking country than in a non-English speaking country. If an ELL is learning the language in a country where people mainly use English for communication, for example, the United States and Australia, the learner is considered an ESL learner (Bell, 2011). If an ELL is acquiring the language in a country where people do not use English as a primary language for communication, such as South Korea or China, the learner is considered an English as a foreign language (EFL) learner (Bell, 2011). ESL learners generally have more opportunities to use their English abilities than EFL learners. EFL learners tend to use their English language skills mainly inside classrooms, while ESL learners tend to use their English abilities both inside and outside classrooms. Since ESL learners live in English-speaking countries, it is essential for them to understand the cultural aspects of the country that they live in. It is also important to inform ESL learners about how to use their English skills for activities such as completing forms (Bell, 2011) and ordering food in a restaurant. On the other hand, since EFL learners have little opportunity to use English outside classrooms, it is critical for them to have a great deal of classroom experience using their English speaking and listening abilities rather than English writing and reading abilities only (Bell, 2011).

ELLs have many reasons and goals for studying English. Some may need to know English because they are moving to an English-speaking country, while others want to learn English for test-taking purposes or to make travel easier. Whatever the reason for English language acquisition, it is vital for language learners to be well-motivated when learning a

second or foreign language given that language acquisition is a time-consuming process that requires such commitment (Bell, 2011). It is also important for ELLs to not be discouraged during the language learning process, since ELLs often find it difficult to distinguish learning outcomes while acquiring the language.

Statement of the Problem

When dealing with SLA, ELLs often have difficulties in evaluating or identifying progress in their own language learning. One reason that ELLs have difficulty learning English is that they have significantly different educational backgrounds. If ELLs are not fluent in a first language, they would take longer to learn a foreign or second language than other language learners who are fluent in their first language (Robertson and Ford, 2017).

Another reason that ELLs show differences in learning processes are due to individual differences; for example, an ELL's personality and character traits affect foreign or second language acquisition (Yan and Horwitz, 2008). If ELLs are full of curiosity, interest about a certain topic or phenomenon, and like to communicate with other people, they are extroverts (Zhang, 2008). Whereas ELLs who are interested in dealing with their own thinking, like to answer questions on their own and come up with their own solutions, they are introverts (Zhang, 2008). With respect to SLA, introverted ELLs tend to have less interaction between NESs because they are afraid to make mistakes or errors while using their English skills. Extroverted ELLs enjoy communicating with NESs even if they make errors while using their English skills (Zhang, 2008).

Moreover, high levels of stress and anxiety in ELLs may result in their not learning English with efficient second language acquisition learning strategies. When acquiring a foreign

or second language, it is important for language learners to lower their stress and anxiety, also called the affective filter, given that their high stress level might make ELLs anxious during SLA. The affective filter hypothesis, introduced by Krashen, supports the theory that if learners feel anxious during their language acquisition, learners are more likely to have inefficient language learning processes during the SLA period (Krashen, 1982). To lower ELLs' level of stress and anxiety, it is critical for them to realize that is normal to make mistakes and errors during SLA and to practice their second language skills on their own. It is therefore important to make language learning fun.

Games, either traditional board games, online, video, and or digital games, are mostly used for entertainment purposes (Dickey, 2007). Playing online games enables users to use their critical thinking skills to complete given tasks and missions (Dickey, 2007). Once game players become accustomed to the rules for a game, they are able to control the game and build winning strategies (d'Astous and Gagnon, 2007). For these reasons, game-based learning can be useful for ELLs because since playing games tends to be a less-stressful task played mostly for entertainment purposes. They may be able to use their second language skills regardless of their limited English proficiency skills.

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following questions are addressed:

- Do participants believe it is possible to engage ESL learners' and ELLs' interests by playing games in classrooms?

- Do students believe that teachers and instructors can lower ESL learners' and ELLs' stress and anxiety levels, or the affective filter, during SLA or while playing games?

- Will learners say that game-based learning promotes learners' self-study habits or autonomous learning for second or foreign language acquisition?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine whether game-based learning for ELLs is useful for their SLA. When dealing with evaluation or measurement of ELLs' language abilities, teachers tend to focus on using multiple-choice tests or standardized testing methods (Herrera, Cabral and Murry, 2013). Distributing multiple-choice tests in classrooms is convenient for teachers because they can check their students' language abilities without providing authentic evaluation materials in classrooms (Herrera et al., 2013). Classroom teachers often prefer handing out standardized testing materials because of students' lack of exposure to English or inadequate classroom materials for effectively measuring students' English language abilities. Given that playing games can be entertaining and fun, there is a good chance that ELLs will lower their stress and anxiety level during game play.

It is critical for ELLs to know that, during game play whose purpose is game-based learning, winning the game is not the primary goal or consideration. Although competing against other game players may bring negative results, competing with other classmates can create positive effects. The general acceptance or tolerance of competition in education, such as in playing board and online games, can promote or create a learner's interest in educational learning materials (Burguillo, 2010).

Many players do not enjoy competition against their peers in classrooms (Burguillo, 2010), and game players or students in classrooms might be uninterested or unmotivated to play games in classrooms or during SLA if the games become too competitive. It is important for both teachers and peer game players to seek to persuade reluctant students to participate in games, and to learn to enjoy such practices for entertainment purposes rather than as an act of language learning in a class.

Since motivation can also lead to self-study, it is essential to provide motivation for ESL learners and ELLs. Using a self-study method will enable students take control of their learning materials, and self-study is particularly significant because it may allow the learner to discover their own personal English acquisition process (Rhoads and deHann, 2013). If students enjoy game play in class, they may play them independently, online or at home. Students and language learners tend to be highly motivated and empowered when a teacher or an instructor provides well-organized study materials for them. Such an act of a teacher and an instructor will create interest and motivation for ELLs and ESL learners (Rhoads and deHann, 2013). Independent game play can provide that motivation.

Definition of Terms

- *Lingua Franca*: A term that refers to English, meaning English is used as a means of communication regardless of their diversity of first language. For example, South Koreans and Chinese are able to communicate in English even if they do not speak each other's languages.

- Second language acquisition (SLA): The term refers to the process of learning English as a second language by language learners who do not speak English as their first language.

- English as a second language (ESL): The term refers to the practice of language learners who acquire English as a second language. Language learners who are in ESL settings generally live in an English-speaking country while acquiring the language, and are likely to use English in places other than just classrooms.

- English as a foreign language (EFL): The term refers to the practice of language learners who acquire English as a foreign language. Language learners who are in EFL settings generally live in a non-English speaking country and acquire the English language through classrooms only, and may have little opportunity to use it outside the classroom.

- Native speakers of English (NESs): A term that refers to those who speak English as their first language.

- Non-native speakers of English (NNESs): A term that refers to those who speak a first language other than English. Generally, their primary language is not English.

Significance of the Study

In my experience of learning a foreign or a second language, I found it difficult to use my language skills or English language skills all by myself, and I had little experience in speaking or listening to English while I was beginning to learn English. Teachers used multiple-choice tests for evaluation of my English skills, and I mainly learned English for test-taking purposes, such as college entrance examination and job-requirement testing purposes.

Language learning requires effort, commitment, and time. This daunting task can discourage language learners, and they might eventually lose motivation for learning a foreign or second language. It is essential for language learners to have clear or distinct objectives and

goals in seeking to acquire a foreign or second language, and it is particularly important to help both ELLs and ESL learners realize that language acquisition itself need not be boring and overwhelming. This study and the accompanying analysis will be a useful resource for providing guidelines for establishing game-based learning as an efficient tool for use in classrooms by all levels of ELLs and ESL learners.

Limitations and of Delimitations of the Study

Limitations of the Study

Data for this study was collected from an adult learning institution in a mid-sized town, mid-south in the United States. The data was collected from a small number of participants and cannot be generalized to another population. The classroom was small with the number of classmates and population changing each week due to weather conditions and other reasons. Interviews, questionnaires and game play were conducted once, and the ages of all participants in the study spanned a single English level.

Assumptions of the Study

The underlying assumptions were that participants in questionnaires and interviews would be honest and genuine in answering the questions proposed after game play.

Delimitations of the Study

Game Play in the Classroom

By playing games in classrooms, students can enhance their interactivity and independent thinking skills, through the need to develop gaming strategies during game play (Talak-Kiryk, 2010). Moreover, a collaborative learning environment, in other words, working with other

language learners, can boost their self-confidence level. Minimal intervention by the principal investigator enabled the participants' active involvement in playing games and building gaming strategies on their own. There are a variety of ways to win at games, and instructors did not provide gaming strategies to their students. The game in this study was chosen by the researcher, and other games might yield different finings.

For game-based learning, strategies of using games and other game-related materials can be flexible, depending on teachers' and instructors' lesson plans for ELLs. While teachers can utilize abundant game-based materials provided through the Internet and other sources and apply this material in classrooms. The advantages and disadvantages of playing games and conducting results can vary with the teacher's or the instructor's ability to utilize such results in their actual lesson plans.

The Length of the Study

This study was conducted from the end of March to the beginning of April in 2018 in the same classroom used for data collection. Such data collection included observation, questionnaires, interviews and game play from the research site.

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

Chapter two of this study describes different analyses of research providing background knowledge for this study of game play for ELLs and ESL learners. It includes a search description, a theoretical framework and the review of literature for this study.

Search Description

Playing games is often viewed as for entertainment purposes instead of to be used in a learning environment. However, playing games during the learning process is helpful since game-based learning can create motivation for solving given tasks during game play (Eseryel, Law, Ifenthaler, Ge and Miller, 2014). This chapter will describe game play's benefits with respect to ELLs and ESL leaners' stress and anxiety levels during SLA.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on constructivist theory for language learners. Piaget (1936) introduced the cognitive learning theory that a child can build certain types of knowledge through experience rather than by obtaining information from a book. At the inception of cognitive learning theory, it was applied only to child learning development and theory, but it was later adapted to educating language learners and implemented in both teaching and learning (McLeod, 2015).

Vygotsky (1978) introduced a concept of cognitive learning theory similar to Piaget, but he claimed that learning new knowledge should be based on socio-cultural factors. In other words, learners can acquire new knowledge more efficiently if they have background knowledge about certain aspects of culture and society (McLeod, 2015). Such background information lead to Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development, indicating that learners can build better

knowledge by interacting with peer learners in using different approaches and strategies to solve given problems (McLeod, 2015).

Review of Literature

    Motivation

Playing games for educational purposes can have a positive impact since learners can be easily motivated to play games, particularly video games. Playing video and computer games provides a set of rules, goals, and bonus or compensation similar to that of traditional games (Kim, Park and Baek, 2009). When dealing with learner motivation, intrinsic motivation of learners can be relatively high compared to traditional-based learning methods when they are learning new materials through game-based learning methods (Vos, Meijden and Denessen, 2011).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the fact that learners tend to pay less attention to evident outcomes of the study and enjoy the learning process itself in general (Ryan and Deci, 2000). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to the fact that learners complete their given task to get compensation or achieve an external goal when acquiring new materials (Ryan and Deci, 2000). For example, if a learner finishes the suggested task because it might be helpful for his or her career or experience, the learner is likely to be extrinsically motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

When a learner is acquiring a second or a foreign language, it is crucial for teachers or instructors to provide a comfortable atmosphere and setting in classrooms during the language acquisition process. In other words, teachers and instructors should put forth suitable effort to lower learners' affective filter by reducing learners' stress and anxiety (Roberton, 2011). ELLs

will not likely learn a second or foreign language effectively if their stress levels are high (Roberton, 2011). Game-based learning can help learners assess or measure their own learning progress while playing games and may enable them to find their own strengths and weaknesses within their learning outcomes (Kim et al., 2009). Game-based learning can create intrinsic and extrinsic student motivation for solving suggested tasks during game play (Eseryel et al., 2014). It is also essential to maintain interactivity with other players for game-based learning (Eseryel et al., 2014).

Mobile Devices and Learning

The development of mobile devices helps in keeping convenient and such usage is contributing to the rise of "mobile learning," one of the most effective learning strategies for all people, including language learners (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009, p. 158). There seems to be a lack of definitive definition of "mobile learning" because the technological development is growing rapidly as time goes by (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009, p. 158). One of the reasons that mobile learning is emerging is because of the different technological devices to enable language learners to have easy access to language learning devices (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2009). It is essential for language learners to have exposure to listening practices, and ELLs even more so. In addition, language learners who are familiar with the use of mobile technology can be flexible in acquiring new study materials regardless of the learner's physical location (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2009).

Stress and Anxiety for L2 Learners

Language learners and ELLs face challenges when it comes to learning a foreign or second language because of high levels of stress and anxiety during the language acquisition process. Krashen (1982) introduced five learning hypotheses related to language acquisition. One

is the affective filter hypothesis, and supports the theory that if learners are uncomfortable and anxious during the language learning process, the outcome of learning a foreign or second language will not be successful (Krashen, 1982). Such factors can be especially true for basic-and-lower-proficiency-level ELLs because of their lack of English skills. To lower their stress and anxiety levels, it is important to inform language learners that it is quite normal to make mistakes or errors while learning English (Armstrong, 2016).

Students' silence or reticence in second or foreign language settings is common regardless of their academic and proficiency levels (Donald, 2010). One of the solutions that can reduce students' hesitation to speak in L2 is to practice group exercises in the classroom. Students will be able to help each other to answer difficult questions (Donald, 2010). In addition, it is insufficient to provide error correction practices for students in such groups, because it raises their stress and anxiety level (Donald, 2010).

One other factor that can lower language learners' stress and anxiety is to focus on and utilize collaborative learning environments, which involve group exerciFses and playing games (Roberton, 2011). Conducting group exercises and working with peer language learners might enhance their self-confidence level, because learners are able to find their own strengths and weaknesses based on their collaborative learning environment (Roberton, 2011). FL and L2 learners tend to have high levels of stress and anxiety when they are in different cultural background settings using their FL and L2 language skills (Yan and Horwitz, 2008).

Gamification and Game-Based Learning

While at first glance, the words "gamification" and "game-based learning" do not appear have a distinctive difference when it comes to explaining the concept of playing games.

However, researchers claim that the concepts of gamification and game-based learning are not the same. Gamification refers to adding gaming elements to a nongaming situation (Designing Digitally, 2017). In other words, a certain situation was not related to games at first, but later on was adapted to incorporate games and their rules such as providing incentives, rewards, and prizes (Designing Digitally, 2017). The concept of gamification is mostly used in elearning materials and devices due to their characteristics that can provide compensations (Designing Digitally). An example of gamification learning is *Duolingo*, a language learning website which offers scores, levels and compensations after a user completes suggested missions or tasks (Duolingo, 2011).

According to Designing Digitally (2017), game-based learning is a process where language learners use the actual game for their learning process both inside and outside the classroom. Through game-based learning, learners or game players can set a certain learning objective and find out whether the outcome of game play is beneficial for the game player. Game-based learning also encourages game players and learners to use their problem-solving and independent thinking skills (Designing Digitally, 2017). It is not only restricted to elearning devices unlike gamification. Game-based learning can create new learning input during game play, and use and apply such background information to other learning activities besides game play (Designing Digitally, 2017).

Even though there is an argument as to the distinction between gamification and game-based learning, this study will use the two words interchangeably. The game used for the data collection in this study is not an elearning tool; however, the participants were not required to learn new materials from the game and had a concept that the first player who earned 500 points

was the winner of the game. The game for this study was mainly used to determine whether the participants are engaged and motivated to learn English while playing games in the classroom.

Traditional, Online, Digital Games and Learning

Although there are negative aspects to playing digital games, some scholars claim that it might improve students' learning habits (Hong, Cheng, Hwang, Lee, and Chang, 2009). Hong et al. (2014) found such reasoning can be supported by the fact that game players can use their own critical and analytical thinking skills. Given that digital games allow players to use their interactivity and problem-solving strategies, digital games can be used as an educational tool for students and language learners. Furthermore, they believe that game players tend to be fully motivated when they are playing games because they need to complete the given mission or task (Hong et al., 2009).

In massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), the user should be able to utilize their communication skills with other players, and use their critical thinking skills to complete the given task or mission (Dickey, 2007). McCreery et al. (2014) holds that massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) promote a game player's problem-solving skills and active involvement in game play (Eseryel et al., 2014). MMOG users are accustomed to completing complicated tasks and problems due to the inherent characteristics of playing online games with others. (Eseryel et al., 2014). Since game players use their own critical thinking and problem-solving skills, MMOGs and online games can be used for educational purposes, (McCreery et al., 2014). While it is essential that MMORPG users can use their interactivity skills with other players, it is significant to realize that MMORPGs and MMOGs are mostly used for entertainment purposes, and users should be able to distinguish advantages and disadvantages of the use of MMORPGs and MMOGs for educational purposes (Dickey, 2007).

Traditional board games such as *Monopoly* and *Scrabble* can be fun to play regardless of a player's social demographics such as gender and age (d'Astous and Gagnon, 2007). If game players are familiar with the games, it is likely that they will have less difficulties playing games (d'Astous and Gagnon, 2007). If game players are fully aware of the gaming rules, they may take control of the game or have the authority to play the game and build gaming strategies to win.

Why Do People Like to Play Games?

Some people might enjoy playing games while others might not be interested in playing games even for stress relief and spending their spare time on their own. Doing physical activities can also relieve stress too as well as playing games. It is likely that games create a positive impact on both physical and mental reasoning. Playing games for educational purposes often focuses on the aspects to measure gamers or learners' background knowledge or evaluate their own skills and abilities for certain information that they have acquired (O'Halloran and Deale, 2010). Moreover, based on the scoring system of the games, players can measure their current position. In other words, players are able to tell whether each player's performance of the game is good or bad (O'Halloran and Deale, 2010). According to O'Halloran and Deale (2010), when creating game-play strategies for game players or students, it is crucial for players to be fully motivated and recognize the positive impact of playing games with a certain expected outcome of their gaming results (O'Halloran and Deale, 2010).

It is challenging for L2 learners to recognize the gaming instructions in their L2. It might be even difficult for low-proficiency-level L2 learners based on the fact that their levels of stress and anxiety gets higher whenever they are using their L2 skills. To reduce the affective filter for ELLs, it is critical for instructors or game organizers to develop an appropriate and negotiable approach for ELLs to play games efficiently and sufficiently. In addition, it is important for

game players or ELLs to recognize that the trial-and-error during the game play can be completely necessary (Lam, 2014).

Lam (2014) says that, in addition to playing traditional games, video game users also need to be motivated for their L2 learning strategies. One of the disadvantages of playing video games for educational purposes is that users or language learners might experience difficulties if they are not skillful in using computers, laptops or smartphone devices. It is important for instructors or game organizers to inform other users who are not familiar with using mobile devices for their language learning progress.

Learners' Attitude and Emotion for L2 Acquisition

Tomlinson and Masuhara (2009) believe that acquiring L2 is difficult given that the process of language acquisition is invisible and intangible. Learning a language is not like solving math equations and problems that provides precise answers to questions. Since it is difficult to measure the actual learning progress of L2 acquisition, it is crucial for L2 learners to be fully motivated and be encouraged to learn L2. Moreover, it is important for learners to express their feelings or emotions to the teacher for their language learning process. In other words, it is important for language learners to let teachers know how they feel about learning a language. For example, if a learner does not want to or does not feel like learning English, the results of the language learning process will not be useful (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2009).

Advantages of Game Play for Learners

As a part of L2 learners' assessment and evaluation practice, some learners prefer playing games and trying to figure out their strengths and weaknesses, while others may consider playing games as not part of their education because of its entertainment factors (Bogost, 2008). It has

always been true, particularly for video games, that learners tend to pay attention to the fun part of games rather than regarding games as educational tools.

Some traditional games draw interest for learners in terms of acquiring new materials and enable learners to be deeply involved in both learning new materials and playing games (McClarty, Orr, Frey, Dolan, Vassileva and McVay, 2012). Such learner's involvement is called the "learning progressions" where learners have to be familiar with their study materials in advance and be able to understand the learning material (McClarty et al., 2012, p. 22). McClarty et al. (2012) stated that such similar ideas are also applied to video games that game players can repeat the same practices until they understand the rule of the games.

Disadvantages of Game Play for Learners

If learners are unable to keep up with their learning progress and materials, they are less likely to show interest in their learning material (McClarty et al., 2012). Some researchers claim that playing games, particularly playing online and video games, is not beneficial for learners due to the frequency of game play (Paraskeva, Mysirlaki and Papagianni, 2010). In other words, for online and video games, young learners might become addicted when they play games because of the characteristics of games. For example, MMORPG users are assigned to a role and have responsibility to build a "race, and deploy [their] enemy" in order to "overcome [their] opponents" (Starcraft II, 2018). Game users show interest when they complete given tasks. For online game play, there might be distinctive gender differences for game play, particularly for MMOGs. While male game-players tend to enjoy completing the given task during MMOGs, female game-players typically use MMOGs to connect and interact with other online users, thereby functioning as social networking sites like *Facebook* and *Twitter* (Paraskeva et al., 2010).

Self-Study Habit and Deep Learning Strategy

Having a positive attitude towards self-study can make learners gain self-confidence in their studies, and enable students to take control of their learning materials. (Rhoads and deHann, 2013). Students and language learners are highly motivated and empowered when a teacher or an instructor provides well-organized study materials for them (Rhoads and deHann, 2013). Thorough and detailed guidelines for self-study will enhance students' academic performance and proficiency levels in their study (Rhoads and deHann, 2013). According to Howlett, Bowles, and Lincoln (2017), suggesting to students interesting and relevant books related to their learning materials can also create self-thinking or independent thinking skills during the learning process.

Deep learning strategy refers to the concept that students can develop their thinking and synthesizing skills on their own for their learning progress (Vos, van der Meijden, and Denessen, 2011). It is apparent that playing games during class can create interest for children and young learners, since it allows them to control their learning progress. (Vos et al., 2011). Deep learning strategy is more efficient as compared to surface learning because surface learning strategy focuses on the rote learning method for the suggested information. (Vos et al., 2011). Rote learning refers to the fact that students are focused on learning the material using traditional learning methods such as memorizing vocabulary (Vos et al., 2011). In addition, given that students need to come up with their own ideas to acquire new materials efficiently, deep learning strategy enhances students' intrinsic motivation (Vos et al., 2011).

Chapter 3. Methodology

This study examines questions related to language learners' perceptions about game playing. This chapter describes the research design, settings, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis used in this study. This investigator uses qualitative research methods and social constructivism theory through a case study approach. The interviews collected from participants are coded using theming codes, and field notes were written during the data collection procedure, and observation procedures of this study to effectively analyze the data.

Research Questions

For the purpose of the study, the following questions have been addressed:

- Do participants believe that it is possible to engage ESL learners' and ELLs' interests by playing games in classrooms?

- Do students believe that instructors can lower ESL learners' and ELLs' stress and anxiety, or the affective filter, during SLA or while playing games?

- Will learners say that game-based learning promote learners' self-study habits or autonomous learning for a second or foreign language acquisition?

Research Design

The method of qualitative research was used for this study because language learning progress is not easy to identify, and using qualitative research is appropriate for issues and studies that are not easily measured (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Given that the research method itself explores "human problems and [characteristics]" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 43), the qualitative research method promotes focusing on the language learners' individual ability for

language acquisition. Such research may produce results that are more suitable and helpful to allowing each student to collect appropriate language learning strategies and plans.

The study is based on the social constructivist theory of qualitative research. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), social constructivism refers to the fact that individuals have different insights of their living society. Social constructivists view certain happenings from a general point of view rather than having different and narrow points of view (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Therefore, this approach heavily relies on the participant's viewpoint of a given situation, and researchers should not force or suggest that participants provide answers the researcher wants to hear in a certain situation.

Setting

Description of the Research Site

I conducted this study at an adult English language institution for ESL learners, located in a mid-sized town in the mid-southern United States with participants who had diverse cultural backgrounds and different primary languages. Their English training and educational backgrounds varied widely, as did their ages. It is a non-profit institution and students do not pay to attend, and most instructions are volunteers. Many students work, some full time, go to school, and/or have children at home. The number of classroom participants differed depending on many factors and inclement weather conditions.

Approval from the Research Site

To get into the research site, I took a few actions. Firstly, I had a meeting with the program director to explain the purpose of the study, the role of the principal investigator and the participants of the study. Secondly, I met the executive director of the institution and explained

the same information. Then, I contacted the teacher of a classroom for data collection and explained the study. Finally, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Arkansas (Appendix A).

Role of the Principal Investigator

As a principal investigator of this study, I am responsible both for collecting data from the participants, and the analysis of data. Since I am going to explain the overall gaming procedure to the participants, it is important for participants to let them know that I am only going to give information on the gaming process, and not providing them the winning strategies of the game. Providing essential information to the participants will help draw the participants' active involvement in playing games and building gaming strategies on their own.

Some participants might feel pressured to join in classrooms because they are already part of a member in the class, and I let the participants know that it is not necessary to play games in classrooms if they do not want to. For those participants who want to play games but are unclear about gaming instructions, I used extra time to explain overall gaming instructions and rules.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality of Data and Participants

To conduct this study at the research site, I obtained approval from IRB for data collection of the study. I provided the consent form written in English to all participants of the study (Appendix B). All information collected was kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy.

Conducting surveys and interviews of the participants was done on a voluntary basis. They did not have to do surveys and interviews if the participants were not willing do them. There were no evident risks or benefits to joining the study for the participants. The interview was recorded using an iPhone with the participant's permission. The participants of the study have access to the results of this study. The principal investigator released the results of the study to the participants. All of the data collected for this research was destroyed at the end of the study.

Participants

Selection of the Participants

The participants of the study were four male and 11 female adult ESL learners. All of participants of this study could communicate in English, which is a second language for all of the participants. Getting information on the participants' ages and educational backgrounds was deemed unnecessary to the research. The recruitment of the participants for the study was done through the ESL classroom in the research site.

I chose the participants of the study based on their proficiency levels in English in a higher-level classroom. The number of participants of this study was 15 for game play and an average of eight participants for the observations**,** and three participants for the interview. Classes during the observation had an average of six to eight students every week. During the observation period, severe thunderstorms occurred for the entire period of observation. The number of students and participants might differ depending on the weather conditions of that day.

Motivation for Selecting the Participants

Considering the fact that I could not go into every classroom for game play, a particular classroom was chosen for the following reasons:

    a) participants' English communication skills were higher compared to other students at the research site and

    b) since the research is based on game play, such background information and skills would better enable participants to freely participate in this study.

Data Collection

Time of the Data Collection

The data collection for this study was performed during the regular class time. The participants of the study did not have difficulties being on time for data collection of this study since they were already going to the class as usual.

Instruments of Data

The participants needed to understand the rule of the game and other instructions which are necessary for game play. The participants used all four English language abilities including speaking, listening, reading and writing. They needed to read their created headlines to other game players, ask questions if they had them, write down headlines if necessary, and listen to gaming instructions before playing the game.

The Game *Man Bites Dog*

The game *Man Bites Dog* is a card game for creating headlines or titles similar to newspaper article titles. The game instructions said it was suitable for ages eight and above. The

number of players that can play at a time are a minimum of two and a maximum of six players. While the game is not specifically designed for ELL use in improving English skills, it was hoped that the game would provide motivation for learning English. Playing games tended to relieve students' worries about completing homework and taking tests during the language learning progress. One of the fears that ELLs have during the language acquisition process is making mistakes and errors. However, if errors and mistakes occur during game play, peer game players can help one another.

Procedures of the Game *Man Bites Dog*

The suggested steps below are the overall procedures of the game *Man Bites Dog*. I introduced the overall procedures to the participants before game play (Appendix C).

1. There is a total of 106 cards with three exclusive cards and one instruction card inside the box.

2. There is a number at the bottom of the card which shows the point value of each vocabulary word.

3. One of the game players needs to have a pen and a piece of paper to keep scores for each player.

4. A dealer hands out cards to the group.

5. A dealer shuffles card stacks well.

6. Each player is given five cards during each play from the dealer.

7. After players get all five cards from the dealer, players look at their cards.

8. And then, players can decide if they want to get rid of one of their cards. Players can throw away a maximum of three cards.

9. The dealer replaces the card from the card stacks that each game player threw away, starting from the player on the dealer's left side.

10. After players had a chance to throw away their cards, the dealer shows the best headline to other players by laying down cards on the desk.

11. The headlines that each player made have to be reasonable and make sense.

    Good example: Family Mourns Dead TV Actor (the headline makes sense by having a subject, verb and object within the headline)

    Bad example: Dog Crazy Saves Blonde Market (the headline does not make sense)

12. If many players decide the headline does not make sense, the player who showed the headline must pick it up and make a new headline.

13. If a player cannot make a headline, the player's score will be zero for that round.

14. There is a total of three Exclusive Cards from the card deck. Exclusive cards double the value of the cards in your hand. For example, if the player has a total of 50 points for five cards, an Exclusive Card doubles the point values (ex: 50*2=100).

15. The player who gets to 500 points first is the winner of the game!

The steps of the game were adapted from the *Man Bites Dog* by University Games Corporation (2016).

Data Collection Materials

The data collection materials of this study are based on a principal investigator's observation of participants' overall behavior in the classroom on whether the participants were

actively engaged and enjoyed their classroom activities or not. Questionnaires (Appendix D) and interviews (Appendix E) were collected after game play.

Field Notes

For this study, I decided to take field notes during observation of the class on the participants' regular class time. The content of the field notes is mainly based on the participants' overall behavior within the class, and how they dealt with classroom tasks suggested by the instructor. It was necessary to take field notes during the classroom observation because I wanted to find out the participants' overall study habits and their general behaviors in class during classroom sessions. Field notes criteria included (1) whether students are actively involved in class and provide answers to the instructor's questions (2) the participants' interest in classroom materials and (3) whether they are comfortable in class and willing to share their answers with the instructor and other participants while using their English language skills.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study is based on the case study approach of the qualitative research that distinguishes outcomes of the given situation and case (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Using the case study approach, questionnaires and interviews (held in English) were collected. For one of the participants, the second part of the interview was held in Korean and translated into English because of lack of understanding of the questions. All the interviews were transcribed.

Coding

To analyze the collected data from surveys and interviews, I coded them using in vivo, focused and theoretical coding methods (Saldana, 2016). In vivo coding is a process which takes

place at the first stage of the entire coding process, and the data provided an overview of the participant's general perception of game play in class (Saldana, 2016). According to Saldana (2016), the second coding process was based on focused and theoretical coding, which provided a detailed outcome of perception of game play in class to tell whether game play in class motivated participants to learn the English language.

Checking Trustworthiness and Evaluation of the Research

Researchers need to ensure trustworthiness and evaluation of the research. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), researchers need to determine if the collected data are accurate, and triangulate the data using different approaches. To ensure trustworthiness, I coded the transcript of the interview and coded manually. In addition, I also observed the participants' overall classroom behaviors and actions in their class.

Conclusion

The methodologies of this study are based on social constructivism theory and the case study approach. The participants of this study are enrolled in advanced level English classes, and their background information was beneficial to understand student motivation. Using the case study approach for the participants of this study is appropriate given that the participants are in the same setting even though each participant's personality and character traits might differ (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Chapter 4. Results

This qualitative study addressed whether students' perception of game play during class affected English learning in the classroom. Data collected included observations from the classroom, interviews from the participants, questionnaires collected from the participants, and game play. A total of 15 participants played the game at the research site, and participants who joined the game provided responses based on their game play. There were four male and 11 female participants with a total of 15 participants, with ages ranging from 20s to 80s. The instructor of the class also joined to play the game and is a NES.

Three participants agreed to do an interview with semi-structured interview questions, that enabled them to answer questions while providing background information before the interview (Olivia, 2018). By using a semi-structured interview process, a researcher can be adjustable or flexible, in terms of asking different types of questions related to the research topic, and can give interview participants plenty of time to prepare for answering questions (Olivia, 2018).

Research Questions for This Study

The following questions will be explained in the chapter:

- Do participants believe that it is possible to engage ESL learners' and ELLs' interests by playing games in classrooms?

- Do students believe that teachers and instructors can lower ESL learners' and ELLs' stress and anxiety, or the affective filter, during SLA or while playing games?

- Will learners say that game-based learning promotes learners' self-study habits or autonomous learning for a second or foreign language acquisition?

Research Results

The results and data collection analysis are based on observations, interviews and questionnaires. Since participants could give more than one response to each of the multiple-choice questions, a qualitative interpretation was used.

Results Related to Questionnaires

A total of 15 participants played *Man Bites Dog* for the entire class period of two hours. Five game players formed one group and there were three groups in total. I explained the rules of the game before playing the game and answered their questions if they had any. I conducted questionnaires about their general thoughts about the game after they finished playing the game. The analysis of data collection is based on the case study approach using the class as a case.

Experience of Game Play

For the experience of game play in general and in class, most participants (14 out of 15) had experience in playing games both inside and outside classrooms. One of the participants answered that they had no experience playing games. For game play in class, the majority of participants (10 out of 15 participants) had experience playing games in classrooms during the previous six years. Four of the participants answered that they had no experience playing games both inside and outside classrooms, and one participant answered game play was not applicable in any situations.

- Research Question: Do participants believe that it is possible to engage ESL learners' and ELLs' interests by playing games in classrooms?

Participants' Interest in the Game *Man Bites Dog*

In terms of engaging interest in playing games, eight out of 15 participants answered that they liked to play the game *Man Bites Dog*. One participant answered that the learner both liked and disliked playing the game in class. One participant preferred not to answer whether the learner liked to play the game within the class.

Why Did the Participants Like to Play the Game *Man Bites Dog*?

Similar to other questionnaires, the participants provided multiple answers on why they liked to play the game inside the classroom. The most frequent or relevant answer (10 out of 21 responses) that the participant provided was that they liked the concept of the game being creative by using different vocabulary. Two out of 21 responses were related to the perceptions that playing the board or card games with other participants was fun and enjoyable as part of a social activity. Five responses were based on the interest of game play, that it is fun and entertaining to play games sometimes. One of the responses (out of 21 responses) was that the participant did not have to worry about making mistakes during game play. Other feedback that was from one of the participants was that "it helps me to know new words."

Why Did the Participants Not Like to Play the Game *Man Bites Dog*?

Five participants (out of 15) responded that they did not like the game. Nine responses were related to the fact that the respondents did not like to play the game. Four responses (out of nine responses) were that the concept of the game which required them to make headlines was not enjoyable. Two respondents of the questionnaire liked traditional learning methods rather than playing games in class. The other two responses were related to the fact that playing games in classrooms is a waste of time. One of the responses came directly from the participant, and

commented that "I think it is time-consuming and I always had bad luck, which is I didn't enjoy it. But it is helpful to gain vocabulary and practice."

Will Playing Games in Classrooms Help You to Learn English?

With respect to determining opinion about game play in class, 13 participants answered that playing games in classrooms will help them to learn English. The other two participants responded that playing games in classrooms will not be helpful in learning English.

Results Related to Observations

Descriptions and Materials of the Classroom

Since the game play for data collection was conducted in a classroom, observation of the participants in classrooms was necessary to find out the overall behavior and how the participants deal with the instructor's questions and share their answers. Since the research site offers classes for ESL students, the classroom content materials are mostly based on studying and improving their English skills. The class is held for two hours every Monday to Thursday with a different syllabus every day. For example, the course name of the class that I observed was "Current Events and the United States History."

A total of eight students were in the class during the observation. An average of 10 to 15 students are normally in the class, but the number in attendance might differ depending on many things. The topic of the class was to learn different kinds of idioms using the word "square." For example, students had to figure out the meaning of phrasal verbs using the word "square," including "square off," "square with," and "be there or be square." Even though students in this class are at a higher level compared to other students in the research site, the instructor let students use their dictionaries. Some of the students used their dictionaries or smartphones to

find the meaning of the word, whereas other students did not search for the words to find out the

meaning in their first language. One of the phrasal verbs that most students had a hard time

finding the meaning of was "square shooter" and "a square meal." The instructor tried to explain

different phrasal verbs to students by using graphic organizers or diagrams to make word

meanings easier to understand.

Activities in the Classroom

During the class, the instructor tried to make students use all the four language skills of

writing, speaking, listening, and reading. It was not a typical teacher-centered classroom since

the curriculum or materials in the classroom focused only on improving their English language

skills. The instructor brought several copies of newspapers and let students work in groups of

two or three. Students picked their topics from the newspaper and read the article, and then

summarized the story and shared their topics in front of the class. By doing this activity during

class, students are able to use their critical thinking and synthesizing skills because they need to

find the important aspect of the story in general. While students share the stories of the articles

that they chose, the instructor kept asking questions beginning with "why," "what," "how" and

"what if," or other questions that could promote students' independent-thinking skills or

comprehension skills based on their reading materials from the newspaper.

During other days of classroom observation, students were learning about the United

States Interstate Highway system (such as U.S Route 66) and U.S history (by discussing

President Eisenhower). Since students came from different cultural backgrounds and they were

less familiar with U.S history, the instructor spent some time on providing background

information on the classroom content material. The instructor told students to take their turns

reading the textbook out loud in front of class. Each student read one paragraph out loud, and

while students read the text, the instructor asked questions about whether students have words that they do not understand from the text. The instructor explained the meanings of the words based on their questions. The instructor still let students use their dictionaries in class.

- Research Question: Do students believe that teachers and instructors can lower ESL learners' and ELLs' stress and anxiety, or the affective filter, during SLA while playing games?

Students' Level of Stress and Anxiety in the Classroom

Since the students were at a higher level compared to other classrooms at the research site, students shared their thoughts and asked questions freely if they had one. Not all of the students within the classroom were willing to share their answers and thoughts to the entire class; however, students who shared their opinions in front of class seemed to have fewer difficulties talking in front of other people. When students shared their answers, the instructor did not correct the student's mistakes or errors during utterance even if there were mistakes. Even if some students did not share their opinions in the class, the instructor did not force or make them speak in front of class.

In terms of reading out loud in front of class, students were not reluctant to read the textbook in front of other students and the instructor even though students mispronounced the words and were not aware of the meaning of the words from the textbook. One student suggested to summarize the textbook material before the end of class. When the student suggested the activity, the instructor took the student's opinion and let other students practice summarizing skills in front of other students. Students freely shared their opinions and answers if they had one and everybody paid attention to other students.

Time Management in the Classroom

The instructor created lesson plans for every class for two hours but the instructor did not try to cover all the lesson plans if the class was running out of time. If the instructor did not go through all lesson plans during that day, the same lesson plan would be covered on the next day. Students did not have to worry about not clearly understanding the material in class and could just ask questions the next day. Sometimes when students share their opinions and questions during class, it might take some time to discuss certain issues and share answers. When this happened, the instructor did not try to stop students' discussion activities and let them continue their conversation even though it was not related to the lesson plan of that day.

Results Related to Interviews

Descriptions of the Participants

I interviewed three participants, with their permission, who played games during class. They are all ESL learners with different first languages, ages ranging from 20s to 30s. The average length of residence in the United States is about one to two years. The length of study period at the research site is on average more than one to two years. Three participants first started to learn English at an average age of 10 years old. Participants answered that the motivation of learning English at an average age of 10 was because it was mandatory to learn English in their school system. In other words, they were forced to learn English because the school required them to learn English as a part of the subject. All participants knew how to use English language before they came to the U.S. Two of the participants speak Chinese as a first language and one participant speaks Korean as a first language.

How did the Participants Feel About Learning English at an Early Age?

Although the participants started to first learn English involuntarily, one of the participants said that the participants wanted to learn English "because learning English is different and I always want to learn something new." Another participant commented that it motivated the participant to learn English because

> My father used to be a English teacher, and I was really young and he, told me, it is great to learn English, and he would play those English songs, when we were at home and I kind of get the environment. It's not like the native speaking environment, but I still got the atmosphere to learn English.

The last participant said that the learner started to learn English because the learner's mother "made to learn English," and did not share any further comments or feelings.

Experience of Game Play

In terms of general game play, which can occur inside and outside classrooms, all the participants have experience playing games. One of the participants had experience playing card games. They all have experience playing mobile or computer games in their first language if they have free time, but tend to have less experience in playing English games. I asked why they had less experience in playing English games, which are games that the directions and rules of the game are written in English. One of the participants answered that the participant did not have enough chances to play English games when the learner came to the United States. Another reason why that the participant could not play English games was because their country does not offer English games. One of the participants had experience playing English games but did not tell whether the participant played the game inside or outside classrooms.

Experience of Game Play in Classrooms

I asked if the participants have had experience in playing games in classrooms other than the day of data collection. One of the participants said that the learner played "a vocabulary game" and "the teacher would give us some letters in a bowl, and we have to pick up one letter, and we have to say a word start with that letter." The other participant said that the learner had experience in playing games, "When I was in high school, I used to play game that helps me gain vocabulary."

How did the Participants Feel About Playing Games in Classrooms?

Since the participants have experience in games, some participants enjoyed playing games in class while other participants did not enjoy playing games in class. The participant who enjoyed playing games in class enjoyed because it was entertaining. The other participant who did not enjoy playing games in class did not enjoy because playing the vocabulary game was "still like a test instead of game," because the activity "felt like tell me this word and it give me the definition of the word." The participant implied that the gaming activity is more focused on the reviewing purpose of the learning content rather than entertainment purposes. Another participant answered that it is entertaining to play games in class because the learner can learn new idioms and words.

Were the Participants Stressful when They were Told to Play Games in Class?

When it comes to dealing with stress and anxiety levels for the participants during the gaming activity, two of the participants said that their stress level went up when they were told to play games. Most participants have experience playing vocabulary games in class. According to the interview, participants said creating vocabulary during games is fun. However, one of the

participants said that playing games without knowing any new vocabulary made the participant stressful because the participant said that "like the games which have mentioned before, you have to say the word right after you got the letter with you." One of the participants said that the participant was not stressed by playing games in class and that it was enjoyable. The other participant said that the learner's stress level was high at the beginning because "some words are like never seen before."

One of the participants felt comfortable playing games in class and said that "it's not pressure" and "it's not I have to win the game and it is not a race I have to win the game." The participant also said that "it's fun when you play with several people and group work process is really fun, when I was trying to help other classmates to make headlines, it was really fun."

Did the Participants Enjoy Playing *Man Bites Dog* and Want to Play Again?

I asked if the participants enjoyed playing the game in class. One of the participants said the learner did "not very much" enjoy the game because

> Because I thought it was really a waste of time and we only had 45 or 60 minutes in one class. And also I always get bad luck and so it's difficult for me to make the headlines and it's really a waste of time.

The participant did not want to play the game if she had a chance to play inside or outside classrooms. Another participant wanted to play the game again because it was entertaining and fun. The other participant wanted to play the game again because

> Because today, in our group, we had the teacher as a native speaker, so we learned some idioms. And some words, even you know the words before but they have different definition and you can play with that. You can change the, sometimes they can be one meaning as a noun, and different as an adjective. So we can play with that. I think it's fun.

- Research Question: Will learners say that game-based learning promotes learners' self-study habits or autonomous learning for a second or foreign language acquisition?

Did the Participants Think Games Can Help Promote Self-Study Habits?

In terms of dealing with self-study habits while playing games, most of participants gave positive feedback on improving self-study habits by figuring out the meaning of the words or parts of speech of the words, such as the word "go" is a verb and the word "happy" is an adjective. Some of the participants mentioned that it can be helpful to play games instead of taking a written test, since playing games is "a lot easier and fun and could get much more than the reading or writing test." One of the participants said that games can be helpful to promote self-study habits because

> I think I will be able to know my vocabulary skills, and you need to figure out the subject, verb, adjective within the sentence when you need to play the kind of games that we played in today's class. But I am not sure which word is noun or adjective for today's game. But if you have a native speaker in your group, like the teacher in our group, then I will be able to know the meaning of the vocabulary that I didn't know. Then I will be able to find my strengths and weaknesses in using English.

One of the participants answered that playing games introduced in English can promote self-study habits because if the game they want to play is not released in their first language, the game player has to know how to use English in order to play it. According to the participant, for such game that users need to use their English skills, the participant commented that "It's somehow helped them to understand certain words and content. It can help you learn vocabulary. Vocabulary is most helpful to learn when you play games."

Conclusion

To sum up, some participants enjoyed playing games in class while other participants did not enjoy playing games in class. However, most participants paid attention during game play and tried to make headlines even though the words from the card stack were not familiar and were difficult. Many participants worked together to create reasonable headlines despite their difficulties, like if they were new to the game or just how vocabulary is difficult for ESL learners. Group work with other game players and sharing their ideas took place during the entire gaming process, and they liked to use their existing background knowledge to create headlines for each other. Some of the participants thought having a NES in their group might be more beneficial to play the game and learn new vocabulary during the gaming process.

It is also crucial to lower students' or the participants' stress level when they have unfamiliar or new curriculum or study materials in class. Playing games can also improve self-study habits and enable ESL learners to find their own strengths and weaknesses in learning English. Most of all, it is important to let ELLs and ESL learners realize that there is a variety of methods to learn English effectively inside and outside classrooms. Learning a second or foreign language is challenging, but it is important to find ways on how to learn L2 or FL effectively as language learners.

Chapter 5. Discussion

This chapter will provide a summary of this study's findings based on data collection, discussions of the study, and suggestions for future game play in class, or additional research necessary to apply game play adequately in ESL classrooms.

Summary of Results

The objectives of this study were to investigate whether playing games will create interest during SLA and whether games could function as an efficient tool for learning L2 or FL. Moreover, this study also tried to discover how to lower students' and language learners' stress and anxiety levels during the language learning process. Based on data collected from the research site, the following implications and conclusions can be made based on the research questions.

- Research Question: Do participants believe that it is possible to engage ESL learners' and ELLs' interests by playing games in classrooms?

A total of 15 participants played the game, and eight participants answered they liked to play *Man Bites Dog*. Most participants liked the game because they liked the concept of the game by creating headlines by using vocabulary. Some participants liked the game just for entertainment purposes and other participants thought that group work during game play was meaningful during the gaming process. Three participants agreed to do an interview, with their permission, and most of interview participants commented that playing games can be interesting in SLA. According to the participants from the interview, gaming activity in class can be another tool to acquire English with the use of traditional learning methods such as memorizing vocabulary and taking written tests.

- Research Question: Do students believe that teachers and instructors can lower ESL learners' and ELLs' stress and anxiety, or the affective filter, during SLA or while playing games?

One of the participants from the interview and who joined game play in class commented that the learner's stress level increased when the learner was informed to play the game. The reason why the participant was stressed was because the learner was not familiar with the game *Man Bites Dog,* and the lack of background information on vocabulary that was used in the game. Another participant did not feel stressful to play the game in class. The other participants were anxious because the learners have to use their own background knowledge without learning a new vocabulary.

During the observations in class, the instructor asked questions to students while covering the lesson plan materials. Students shared their opinions and answers without difficulties. The instructor gave plenty of time to share their answers and thoughts in front of the class. In terms of correcting mistakes, the instructor did not correct students' mistakes in class if students made one.

- Research Question: Will learners say that game-based learning promotes learners' self-study habits or autonomous learning for a second or foreign language acquisition?

Thirteen participants of this study responded that playing different types of game will help to learn English and two participants thought playing different types of game will not help to learn English. One participant from the interview said that playing games can help to improve self-study habits because it will let the participant know their strengths and weaknesses while

playing games. The other participant said that playing games is a lot easier and more fun than taking a written test in class.

Future Use of *Man Bites Dog* in Classrooms, Feedback, and Self-Study Habits

Participants in game play commented that their stress levels went up while playing the game because they were unfamiliar with the game and they lacked vocabulary. Playing games is often considered to be entertainment, and game players or students should not be stressed during game play. Since some participants felt uncomfortable because they did not know the game and its difficult vocabulary, teachers and instructors should give background information on the game and the vocabulary to be used before playing games in the classroom. If game players or students are familiar with the rules and vocabulary from the game, their stress levels will decrease because students will have appropriate background information related to what they will do next time. If game players and stress levels decrease, there is a good chance that they might enjoy playing the game either inside or outside classrooms because they would be more familiar with the gaming rules and vocabulary.

When students shared their answers and thoughts in front of class during observations, they appeared not to be afraid about making mistakes. When students made mistakes while they were speaking, the instructor did not provide corrections or suggestions to the students. Second or foreign language acquisition can have a positive impact when the learners feel comfortable to learn the language. Personality also matters when learning a second language. When teachers or instructors create a comfortable setting for SLA and foreign language learning, the learners will learn a foreign or second language efficiently. Providing mistakes and error corrections directly to students in front of the class will make the learner's feel uncomfortable during the learning

process. It is crucial for teachers and instructors not to provide errors and mistakes directly to students during class in order to lower their stress and anxiety levels.

Since many participants answered that playing games in classrooms would help them to learn English, playing games are linked to improving their self-study habits. Participants will be able to figure out their own strengths and weaknesses of their language learning progress, and such factors can help to promote self-study habits. If a language learner realizes its weaknesses, they will try to find a way to improve them and try to find a balance between strengths and weaknesses. Such effort will make the learner apply self-study habits during language learning. Moreover, promoting self-study habits through games will be more interesting than taking written tests due to the characteristic of games, that it is entertaining.

Discussion

Participants' Perceptions about Game Play

Eight participants who played the game *Man Bites Dog* liked the game and five participants did not like to play the game. The participants who liked the game commented that they liked the game because they can be creative using different vocabulary and playing games in class was entertaining and fun. Some of the participants said that they did not have to worry about making mistakes when playing games. Five participants did not like to play the game because they did not like the concept of the game that they need to make headlines from the card stack. Some of the participants wanted to use traditional learning methods such as memorizing vocabulary and reading books. Some of the participants who did not like the game said that playing games in classrooms is a waste of time.

Some participants felt that playing games in the classroom were a waste of time. The actual reason why they felt playing games are a waste of time was unknown. It can be inferred from the response that the participants did not like the game due to its inherent characteristics of games that it is used for entertainment purposes rather than educational purposes. To persuade or convince the participants who thought that playing games in classrooms are a waste of time, one idea might be playing educational games and simple games including *Hangman, Pictionary, Simon Says*, and other games that are suitable for ESL learners and ELLs.

Game play in class or outside classrooms requires the game player's active involvement or commitment in playing games. One of the participants from the interview said that while playing games in class, "everybody had to get their part and they have to work to get the win." Such comment can be related to students' or the game player's active involvement in class. MMOGs require active involvement in game play since game players need to complete the given mission or task (Eseryel et al., 2014). Since the participant mentioned that active involvement while playing games was interesting, active involvement can affect SLA in a positive way. Active involvement in classroom activities let students and ELLs to develop independent thinking skills and cooperative learning environment like group works.

It is promising that many participants gave positive feedback on game play during class. EFL learners tend to have little opportunity to use gaming strategies in class because the learners focus more on learning reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening skills (Bell, 2011). It is important to provide motivation to ESL learners and ELLs to learn English. Each ESL learner and ELL have different reasons to study English, but if they are in class learning English, it is the teacher's or the instructor's job to provide motivations or reasons to let students acquire English effectively in class. Playing games in class can create interest and motivate ESL

learners and ELLs to acquire English with different learning methods. Playing games while learning English can be a different learning approach for many ESL learners and ELLs.

Participants' Stress Level while Playing Games and in Class

When 15 participants played the game during class, they were put together into three groups with five game players within the group. Every participant of the study helped each other to create a nice headline, even though most participants were not familiar with the game itself when they first started playing the game. Donald (2010) stated that playing games while forming groups can lower the participants' or language learners' stress level due to its collective learning environment which allows learners to help each other as peer language learners.

During the observation in class, students shared their thoughts and answers in front of class when the instructor asked questions. Students seemed to not have difficulties sharing their thoughts out loud. Reading out loud also took place in class, each student taking turns to read the textbook out loud. During the reading-out-loud activity, some students mispronounced the word but they were not nervous or embarrassed to make mistakes. The instructor did not provide errors and mistake corrections in class because ESL learners and ELLs might get discouraged by the number of mistakes they make in the classroom (Ustaci and Ok, 2014).

One of the participants from the interview said that the learner was stressful at the beginning because the learner was not familiar with the gaming rules. However, once the learner was used to gaming rules and knew all the gaming steps, it felt comfortable to play the game and not worry about making mistakes. The participants from the interview also commented that some other different vocabulary games made the learner nervous, because the learner has to come up with vocabulary without preparation. However, the participant enjoyed the concept of *Man Bites*

Dog that the learner can create headlines by using different vocabulary. For teachers and instructors, it is important to provide different and creative methods to promote students' vocabulary use during the language learning progress. Promoting students' vocabulary use can be based on playing games or other effective materials. What is most important is that teachers find a way to improve and utilize students' vocabulary background information and skills during their language learning.

Participants' Perceptions about Self-Study Habits

When it comes to dealing with self-study habits in learning English, most ESL learners and ELLs are concentrated on using written textbooks and other written materials rather than other study materials. It can be because of its different settings between ESL and EFL settings that language learners learn English in both English-speaking and non-English speaking countries (Bell, 2011). Thirteen participants from the game thought that playing games can be helpful to learn English skills and two participants thought that playing games will not be helpful to learn English skills. Some of the participants said that playing games can be helpful to promote self-study habits because game play requires commitment and game players needs to come up with game play strategies.

The participants from the interview said playing games will be helpful to use during self-study because the learner will be able to figure out the meaning of the words and be able to tell the parts of speech of the vocabulary. Some of the participants said that taking a written test or reading a book will help to promote self-study habits because playing games in class cannot be trusted sometimes, and there can be bad luck when playing games with other players. Many participants agreed that playing games will be helpful to learn English. Teachers and instructors can provide practice exercises and materials that can promote the learner's self-study habits. The

participant from the interview said that playing games will help to figure out the parts of speech of the vocabulary. It is important to find and provide appropriate study materials to language learners based on their interest of learning. Such information will also help to find the learner's strengths and weaknesses while using their self-study habits.

Suggestions for Future Research

How to Deal with Luck in Game Play

One of the participants from game play commented on the questionnaire that the learner kept having bad luck when making headlines. It was difficult to tell whether the learner had bad luck because of inefficient card shuffling, or if the learner only got bad vocabulary choices from the card stack. Bad luck when playing games is frequently discussed in competitive games like MMORPG such as *Starcraft* and *World of Warcraft* (Grant, 2014). Since *Man Bites Dog* is a card game and there is one winner of the game, it is crucial for game players to know that luck should not work as one of the tools to provide winning strategies for the game. Grant (2014) stated that it is important for game players to realize that good or bad luck, known as "randomness" (Grant, 2014) in game terms, is not the game player's fault and is just a part of characteristics of games in general. It is also crucial for teachers and instructors to tell students that winning the game is not priority in class, and that playing games should be fun and not stressful.

Determining the Frequency of Game Play

Some of the participants from the interview said that they want to play the game again if they have the opportunity or time. The participants thought playing the game for less than two hours was not enough and want to play the game with plenty of time to get used to games. Since

it is a game designed for creating headlines, the participants or game players can use their

English skills to create the game without being in a rush. The participants from game play felt

that they did not have enough opportunity or time to play the game thoroughly. If teachers and

instructors are going to conduct game play in classrooms, it is crucial for them to provide plenty

of experience and time to get used to the game. One idea is playing the same game two or three

times in the classroom, so students can be used to playing the game. The frequency of game play

in class can create students' interest and be helpful to lower students' stress levels during SLA.

Getting Used to Game Play in Class

Some of the participants from game play said that they had experienced playing games in

classrooms from last year to more than six years ago. Some of the participants answered that

they have never experienced playing games in classrooms. Such background information on why

the participants have not experienced game play and the experience of game play is unknown. It

can be efficient for teachers or instructors to provide more experience on game play to ESL

leaners, ELLs, and to students in class. Nowadays, playing games can be viewed as dealing with

cultures through technology (Hafner, 2015). Due to this reason, games enable learners to use

their language skills and abilities during game play (Hafner, 2015).

Conclusion

Playing games in classrooms can be entertaining for some language learners, while other

language learners consider it difficult to play games in classrooms. Some game players might say

that playing games in class will help the game players to learn English while others will say that

it will not be helpful to learn English. Moreover, some game players might say playing games in

class is a waste of time. When conducting games or other activities related to leaning, it is

important to find a balance between how to use classroom activities and traditional learning methods effectively in class. It is also important to lower students' or language learners' stress levels in class during language acquisition. Language acquisition is a challenging task. Overall, it is crucial to realize that utilizing all different classroom materials such as game play, lowering language learners' stress levels, and recommending self-study habits are necessary for the language learning process.

With respect to the game *Man Bites Dog*, the investigator suggests that teachers and instructors who want to use that game should do the following:

a) Provide gaming rules and vocabulary from the card stack well before the actual game play so that students and language learners completely understand the rules and vocabulary required by the game *Man Bites Dog*

b) Tell students and language learners that winning the game is not the priority and all students should have fun

c) Give students and language learners plenty of opportunity or time to get used to the game before the actual game play date

d) Recruit other NESs: it can be peer teachers, instructors, parents, or volunteers, for the actual game play date, since the participants felt comfortable when they had a NES in their group, and

e) It is important not to provide direct feedback to students when they make mistakes and errors in class.

It is difficult to tell the outcome of certain learning processes. Particularly, distinguishing the results of the study on their own is difficult for language acquisition, because language learning progress requires a certain amount of time spent and much of it is intangible. ELLs and

ESL learners often get discouraged due to slow learning progress. Game-based learning can function as an appropriate method to learn English with a positive and active attitude. Moreover, teachers should also encourage shy or introverted students to actively engage in game-based learning and SLA progress, so they can learn that it is natural for making mistakes and errors during SLA.

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Appendix A. Institutional Review Board Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

To:	Se He Hwang
From:	Douglas James Adams, Chair
	IRB Committee
Date:	03/20/2018
Action:	**Exemption Granted**
Action Date:	03/20/2018
Protocol #:	1802100288
Study Title:	Students Perceptions about Gamified Methods in English as a Second Language Acquisition

The above-referenced protocol has been determined to be exempt.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have any questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact the IRB Coordinator at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

cc: Felicia Lincoln, Investigator

Appendix B. Student Informed Consent Form

Peabody 216 ◆ Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701 ◆ (479) 575-4209 ◆ (479) 575-6676 (Fax)

College of Education & Health Professions, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Student Informed Consent Form

Title: Students Perceptions about Gamified Methods in English as a Second Language Acquisition

Principal Investigator: Co-Investigator:
Se He Hwang   Dr. Felicia Lincoln
M.Ed. TESOL   Associate Professor
Peabody Hall 116   Peabody Hall 121
sh019@uark.edu   flincoln@uark.edu

Description: I want to understand how playing games helps adults learn. I want to know what you think about playing games in class. This will help me and other teachers know how to be better teachers.

Benefits and risks: There are no risks in participating in this study. There are no benefits to participating.

Voluntary Participation: You will be asked play games, fill out a surveys and be interviewed by me. You do not have to play games if you do not want to, or participate in any way. The survey will take about 15 minutes and I will help you with it. The interviews will take about 15 minutes.

With your permission the survey and interview will be recorded, on an iPhone or iPad. I will lock it with a password. After the study, I will tell you what I learned.

Confidentiality: All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. All of data collected for this research will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Right to withdraw: You have the right not to join the study if you don't want to, and you may quit at any time.

Informed Consent: I, _____ (please print name), have read information including the description, benefits, risks, participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. I understand that I do not have to join this study if I do not want to. I understand that results of this research will be shared with me. I understand that there are no benefits or risks to participating in this research. By signing this form, I agree to join this research freely, and I got a copy of this agreement from the investigator.

You may contact the principal investigator through email, sh019@uark.edu, and Dr. Felicia Lincoln, my advisor, at flincoln@uark.edu, to ask any other questions.

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

Full Name of the Participant: _____

Signature of the Participant: _____

Date Signed: _____

Appendix C. Game Play Steps for *Man Bites Dog*

1. There is a total of 106 cards with three exclusive cards and one instruction card inside the box.

2. There is a number at the bottom of the card which shows the point value of each vocabulary word.

3. One of the game players needs to have a pen and a piece of paper to keep scores for each player.

4. A dealer hands out cards to the group.

5. A dealer shuffles card stacks well.

6. Each player is given five cards during each play from the dealer.

7. After players get all five cards from the dealer, players look at their cards.

8. And then, players can decide if they want to get rid of one of their cards. Players can throw away a maximum of three cards.

9. The dealer replaces the card from the card stacks that each game player threw away, starting from the player on the dealer's left side.

10. After players had a chance to throw away their cards, the dealer shows the best headline to other players by laying down cards on the desk.

11. The headlines that each player made have to be reasonable and make sense.
    Good example: Family Mourns Dead TV Actor (the headline makes sense by having a subject, verb and object within the headline)
    Bad example: Dog Crazy Saves Blonde Market (the headline does not make sense)

12. If many players decide the headline does not make sense, the player who showed the headline must pick it up and make a new headline.

13. If a player cannot make a headline, the player's score will be zero for that round.

14. There is a total of three Exclusive Cards from the card deck. Exclusive cards double the value of the cards in your hand. For example, if the player has a total of 50 points for five cards, an Exclusive Card doubles the point values (ex: 50*2=100).

15. The player who gets to 500 points first is the winner of the game!

Appendix D. Questionnaires

1. When was the last time you played games in classrooms?
   a) Within the last year
   b) 1 to 3 years ago
   c) 4 to 6 years ago
   d) More than 6 years ago
   e) Never
   f) Not applicable

2. Have you ever played games, including board, card and electronic games?
   a) No
   b) A little
   c) A lot

3. Did you like playing "Man Bites Dog?"
   a) I enjoyed playing "Man Bites Dog"
   b) I didn't enjoy playing "Man Bites Dog"
   c) Prefer not to answer
   d) Not applicable

4. Why did you **like** to play "Man Bites Dog?"
   a) I like to play board or card games with other people
   b) I liked the concept of the game that I can make headlines
   c) I liked the concept of the game that I can be creative using different vocabulary
   d) It is fun to play games in classroom sometimes
   e) I don't need to worry about making mistakes when I play games

5. Why did you **not like** to play "Man Bites Dog?"
   a) I don't like to play board or card games with other people
   b) I didn't like the concept of the game that I have to make headlines
   c) I didn't like the concept of the game that I have to be creative using different vocabulary
   d) I prefer traditional learning methods instead of playing games
   e) Playing games in classrooms is a waste of time

6. Do you think playing different types of games can help you to learn English?
   a) It will be helpful to play different types of games for learning English
   b) It will not be helpful to play different types of games for learning English
   c) Prefer not to answer
   d) Not applicable

Appendix E. Interview Questions

1. How long have you been studying English?

    a. How long have you been studying English at the Ozark Literacy Council?

2. How long have you been living in the United States?

3. At what age did you first start to learn English?

4. Why did you start to learn English?

    a. Did you just like to learn English because it is a different language than you speak as a first language?

    b. Or were there any external factors (ex: you need to use English at the workplace, you live in an English-speaking country, you wanted to come to an English-speaking country, etc.) for learning English?

5. What is your primary language?

6. Do you usually play games (including mobile or smartphone games) whenever you have free time?

    a. If yes, could you explain why and which ones do you play?

    b. If no, could you explain why?

7. Do you have any experience in playing games in classrooms during class?

    a. If yes, did you enjoy playing games in classrooms and describe your feelings about playing games?

    b. If no, do you want to play games in classrooms? Why or why not?

8. Do you think it is fun to play games in classrooms?

    a. If yes, could you explain why?

    b. If no, do you want to focus more on learning classroom materials? Why or why not?

9. When playing games, it might be necessary to use your English speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. Do you think playing games can be helpful to learn English and/or to promote self-study habits for studying English? In other words, if you play games, will playing games can help you to study English by yourself?

       a. If yes, could you explain why?

       b. If no, would taking multiple choice tests or other types of written tests help you to study English by yourself?

10. Do you think it is helpful to play games in English, which is your second language, for your English language improvement?

       a. If yes, could you explain why?

       b. If no, do you want to find a different method to improve your English language skills? Why or why not?

11. Are you willing to play games in class instead of taking tests based on classroom materials?

       a. If yes, could you explain why?

       b. If no, are you uncomfortable playing games in classrooms? Why or why not?